

PS3 • Issue 198 • Resistance 3 Gran Turismo 5 Fallout: New Vegas Medal Of Honor Call Of Duty: Black Ops The Last Guardian Assassin's Creed Brotherhood DmC: Devil May Cry LittleBigPlanet 2 EA Sports MMA

PlayStation 3 PSN PSP 演劇端末

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ISSUE NO **198**
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hands-on

Gran Turismo 5

Buckle up the wait is over

first look

Devil May Cry

Dante gets an extreme makeover

review

Medal Of Honor

The gold standard?

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

RESISTANCE 3

Why Insomniac is set to give gamers sleepless nights

review

Fallout New Vegas

Bringing down the house

news

Call Of Duty

Black Ops goes 3D

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NEWS LITTLE BIG BETA
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Contents **PLAY**

PlayStation 3 PSN PSP 演劇端末

Your gateway to the esoteric world of PlayStation

reviews

- 80 Fallout: New Vegas PS3
- 84 Medal Of Honor PS3
- 88 EA Sports MMA PS3
- 90 Shaun White Skateboarding PS3
- 91 NHL 11 PS3
- 92 DJ Hero 2 PS3
- 93 Front Mission Evolved PS3
- 94 Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland PS3
- 94 BlazBlue: Continuum Shift PS3
- 95 Sengoku Basara PS3
- 96 Heavy Rain: Move Edition PS3
- 96 Racket Sports PS3
- 97 Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage PS3
- 97 Saw II: Flesh & Blood PS3
- 98 FIFA 11 PSP

previews

- 46 Resistance 3 PS3
- 52 The Last Guardian PS3
- 54 Time Crisis: Razing Storm PS3
- 55 Shadows Of The Damned PS3
- 56 Gran Turismo 5 PS3
- 58 Homefront PS3
- 60 Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit PS3
- 62 Spec Ops: The Line PS3
- 64 Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood PS3
- 66 DmC: Devil May Cry PS3
- 68 Alice: Madness Returns PS3
- 69 Dead Space 2 PS3
- 70 Deus Ex: Human Revolution PS3
- 72 Yakuza: Of The End PS3
- 73 Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom PS3
- 74 Marvel Vs Capcom 3: Fate Of Two Worlds PS3
- 75 Preview Roundup

80
review

FALLOUT: NEW VEGAS

Can Obsidian play a winning hand?

essentials

08 Latest News

Reactions from the people that matter on the month's biggest stories, events and announcements.

22 Reload

All the latest from the world of Play online.

42 Re:Play

Your letters answered by the experts. That's us, by the way.

100 Network

Latest reviews from the PlayStation Network.

106 Playlist

Thinking of buying a PlayStation game? Don't make that purchase until you read our verdict.



**SUBSCRIBE
& SAVE 30%
TURN TO PAGE 44**



84
review

MEDAL OF HONOR
Honor the soldier



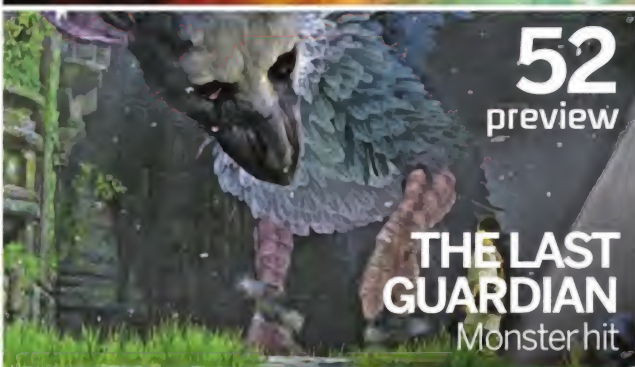
64
hands-on

ASSASSIN'S CREED: BROTHERHOOD
Boys in the hood



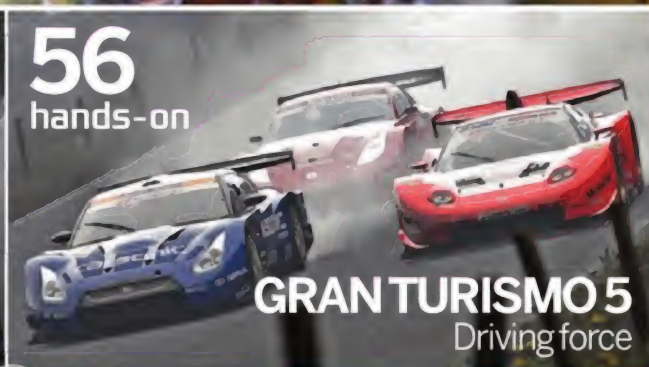
46
exclusive

RESISTANCE 3
Irresistible?



52
preview

THE LAST GUARDIAN
Monster hit



56
hands-on

GRAN TURISMO 5
Driving force

network and store reviews

- 102 Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light
- 103 Tumble
- 103 Top Gun
- 103 Worms 2: Armageddon
- 104 Multiplayer reviews



104
PLAY HD

PLAY DVD

EXCLUSIVE features on this DVD





Latest trailers

All the latest from the world of PS3 gaming

- Call Of Duty: Black Ops
- DmC: Devil May Cry
- Gran Turismo 5
- LittleBigPlanet 2
- inFamous 2

features

Behind the scenes and interviews

- Fallout: New Vegas
- Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II
- Dead Rising 2

network

All the latest from the online gaming world

- Enslaved: Odyssey To The West
- Red Dead Redemption
- Mafia II

reviews

Hear what the **Play** team sounds like!

- Vanquish
- Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow
- EA Sports MMA

dvd-rom content

Wallpapers, software and movies to watch on your PS3 and PSP!

- PS3/PSP Wallpapers & Themes
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FilemanagerPSP, iPSMMovieLoader, Lumox, PSPWare
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Welcome PLAY

The UK's best independent PlayStation magazine

Resistance Is Futile



Despite recent claims from various developers that exclusive games will soon be a thing of the past, they still manage to stir up excitement like few third-party titles ever could. Over the next few months we'll see a stream of Sony exclusives that will be the envy of every non-PS3-owning gamer in existence. *Gran Turismo 5*, *LittleBigPlanet 2*, *Killzone 3*, *MotorStorm: Apocalypse* and

Upon our return we can confirm that with a longer development cycle and a fresh story to tell this has the potential to be the best iteration yet.

Of course we couldn't just survive on first-party titles and so it's a good job we're not being let down by our publishing partners with the likes of *Fallout: New Vegas*, *Medal Of Honor* and *EA Sports MMA* keeping PS3 gaming standards sky high. With the likes of *Call Of Duty: Black Ops*, *Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit* and *Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood* all

due in the next few weeks it will be almost impossible to tear ourselves away from the PlayStation 3 before 2011 rolls around.

Perusing **Play** this month it's clear that we have one of the strongest lineups, both first and third party, ever and that over the next few months, no matter how hard we try, resistance is futile – so why fight it? Give in to your PS3 and experience the finest few months of gaming you're ever likely to get.

K. HENNESSEY Editor

If the power of exclusives is waning – I'm yet to see it

there's so much more that I'm not allowed to disclose right now.

If the power of exclusives is waning – I'm yet to see it. If more evidence is needed then we only need to look at the hysteria whipped up on the internet with the announcement and subsequent trailer release for *Resistance 3*. Knowing that PlayStation owners are feverish for new information on Insomniac's latest franchise update we wasted no time in visiting the studio and seeing the game for ourselves.

contributors



Simon Miller

First, Miller managed to "get back into the gym" this month, which we think means he was far too bulky to fit in there before. It's certainly possible. Second, he

became *furiosus* as a local sandwich shop once again failed to heed his commands for *only tuna* on his jacket potato – *no mayo*. Do you hear us? SIMON MILLER DOES NOT WANT YOUR MAYONNAISE.



Jonathan Gordon

Jon's had a weird month. It must be the rigours of turning 13, or however old he is. Around his birthday he disappeared on what he claimed was

"annual leave". Frankly, we don't believe him. His later claims he was "going to Chicago" left us equally suspicious. Don't let our docile nature fool you, Jon – we're onto your subterfuge.



Dan Peel

Dan, in typical 'look at me I'm Dan' fashion, tried to take the glory away from Jon recently by also having his birthday. Fortunately we're not fools and paid him no

attention even though he clearly, openly and desperately craves it on a daily basis. Honestly, it's sickening. "Oooh, look at me. I can spell!" he shouts from the rooftops. What a nong.

the PLAY promise

Play solemnly swears (raises right hand) to bring you the best PlayStation magazine that is humanly possible.

We will always bring you the most in-depth, impartial, honest reviews and will never bow down to PR or advertising pressure. We have some of the most experienced reviewers in

the industry and we're not afraid to use them. And we take our own screenshots so you can see what the game looks like *when you play it*. We will be the first to break the biggest stories, the first to cover the biggest games and in the most detailed way. We will only ever bang on about the very best PlayStation games, the ones that we would pay our own cash for. We aren't afraid of expressing an opinion, especially when it's for your benefit.

So don't expect our previews to simply regurgitate a load of internet or press release tosh – we'll be telling you whether a game is looking good or not, regardless of the stage of the code.

We want to fuel your passion for gaming like no other magazine and we want you to trust everything you read here. If you don't then you can simply stop buying it. That's how confident we are that you'll love **Play**. Promise.

PLAY

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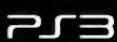
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NEWS

Where fact + opinion ÷ PlayStation = the truth

Contents

10 With great power

First-party devs must push the PS3, according to *MotorStorm* director Matt Southern

12 Full circle

Deus Ex's return owes a lot to *BioShock*, says Eidos Montreal

13 Instant expert

All the latest info on the next *Valkyria Chronicles* game

16 Japanews

The Tokyo Game Show comes back from the dead in 2010

Plus the regulars...

13 Dos & Don'ts

14 Q&A: Yakuza 4

15 Charts

18 The Vault

21 And Finally...

22 Reload



"It's important for first-party devs to have levels of ambition that are still achievable, but signpost what you can do with the machine" – Matt Southern, director, *MotorStorm: Apocalypse* p. 10

This is the first Medal Of Honor on PlayStation since Medal Of Honor: Airborne in 2007

HONORABLE INTENT

Medal Of Honor team "hurt" by Taliban controversy

Speaking exclusively to **Play** on the eve of *Medal Of Honor*'s release, executive producer Greg Goodrich admitted that recent controversy surrounding the game had "hurt," and dented the team's morale. Various news outlets in the US picked up on the use of Taliban-style avatars in *Medal Of Honor*'s multiplayer and as discussed in our last issue it was even condemned by the UK's own defence secretary Dr Liam Fox.

"I'll be honest with you – it hurts," Goodrich admitted to us. "It's a morale killer. Just because from day one our intent has been to honour and to pay respect and we have members in our team that have served in the military, we have members of our team that have lost friends, even family. So our intent has always been to honour

It hurts... because from day one our intent has always been to honour and pay respect

and pay respect and to do it in a manner that made this community of individuals just say 'alright'."

The key issue for Goodrich is that those criticising this aspect of the game would appear to be making judgements based on just one small part of the game when the story being told by *Medal Of Honor* is actually one of great respect for the armed forces

who serve in Afghanistan. He expressed his hope that once people see the rest of the game they'll understand how things have been taken out of context. "When someone grabs a hold of one tiny aspect of something and puts it out there that that's all it's about, and that could not be further from the truth, you just say, 'wow, that's unfortunate,'" said Goodrich. "But I'm confident that once the game gets out and once people get to play the game, understand our story and see what we're doing, it'll be fine, because our intentions are absolutely true and honourable."

The big problem Goodrich believes is that most of these commentators simply don't have an understanding or appreciation of the medium videogames are becoming. "This is the medium of our times, this is how we know best to tell this story and to shine a light on these individuals," he insisted. "They don't quite understand what this medium is or what it has the ability to do. I think when people hear the word 'game' they think of kids and they think 'wheel!', but this is a mature game, it's rated for a mature audience and people that can make their own informed decisions. It's a 'wow' experience – it's our platform to tell a story and there's a group of people that just don't understand that."

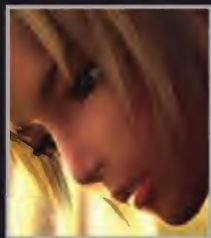
Reviewed!
Read our Medal Of Honor review from page 84

Need To Know IMPORTANT GAMING NEWS YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS



Guybrush the Jedi

LucasArts has revealed that star of *Monkey Island*, Guybrush Threepwood, will be made available as a playable skin in the upcoming *Force Unleashed II*. The original game featured a number of unlockable and downloadable skins including Luke Skywalker and Obi-Wan Kenobi, but this is much more exciting.



Parasite Eve on PSN likely

According to Hajime Tabata, director of *The 3rd Birthday*, Square Enix is currently working on making the original *Parasite Eve* games available on PSN. *The 3rd Birthday* is a sequel to these respected games and fans have been calling for a PSN release for some time.



Zombies and 3D confirmed for Black Ops

Not only has Treyarch confirmed that a zombie mode will be featured in *Call of Duty: Black Ops* but also that the game will be playable in 3D. The zombie mode will be locked to a four-player co-op campaign separate from the main story mode, much as it was with *World At War*.

PLAY TEAM TROPHIES

Things the Play team has achieved this month



PLATINUM: KEITH

Our Great Leader left the harsh confines of *Play*, escaping to where he was told "the grass is greener". You have to admire that moxy.



GOLD: IAN

Close behind Keith thanks to his masterful entries to the *Play* Trophies section this month. Excellent writing, and a handsome gent to boot.



SILVER: DAN

Had himself a fine birthday, but let himself down terribly by not treating us with Polish-wife-cake. Hence: missed out on gold. The fool.



BRONZE: JON

Went to Chicago and became King Of The Windy City. This would be a Platinum award if it weren't a complete and total lie.

Unfair criticism?

Ian Dransfield offers his view on the controversy surrounding MOH



EA WAS QUICK to defend against accusations it was being distasteful in representing an ongoing conflict in videogame

form. After all, it must have seen what happened to *Six Days In Fallujah* – infamously dumped from Konami's release catalogue after the media kicked up a fuss about its content. It makes sense to defend fast and defend hard.

After playing through the game it's much easier to see why the developer was so taken aback by the public outcry. This isn't a game of bombast, of 'hoo-rah!' or of one-man armies taking down the evil foreigners. There are no stolen nukes, no secret plans or hidden superweapons. In fact, there's little reason given for fighting the enemy, other than the assumed knowledge of why the war in Afghanistan began in the first place.

By approaching the situation in such a way – by avoiding asking, answering or even addressing the major concerns about the conflict itself, *Danger Close* has ended up with a game that is simply a story of a dozen-or-so soldiers. It's understandable that some people will be disappointed with this approach, as tackling the

You'll end up feeling sympathy and respect for the soldier

political sensitivity of what many see as a knee-jerk war with heavy civilian costs (and less-heavy, but no less saddening military losses) could have been a huge step forward for videogame narratives.

But I'm not in that camp, and I'm firmly of the belief that *Medal Of Honor* is as sensitive and respectful as its developers and the military advisers involved in its production wanted it to be. You may not agree with the setting, you may not agree with playing as the 'Opposing Forces' in multiplayer, but there's no doubt you'll end up feeling sympathy and respect for the soldier at the end of the game. That's all *Danger Close* ever wanted to do.

word on the tweet



TimOfLegend

"I forgive you, videogames. Want to know why? Because late last night, I finally BEAT *GTA IV*. Yeah! It only took a few hundred more tries."

Double Fine's Tim Schafer finally arrives in 2008. Congrats to him.

Bet on Black Ops

Trigger the gambler

TREYARCH HAS DETAILED each of *Call Of Duty: Black Ops* new Wager modes – free-for-all games on which you can bet COD Points, the in-game currency with which you can buy a host of upgrades.



ONE IN THE CHAMBER

A pure, tense mode, in which you get a pistol with a single one-hit-kill bullet and a melee knife. Each kill gives you a bullet, so you can stock up on them if you use the knife. We think it's the best thing we've played of *Black Ops* so far.



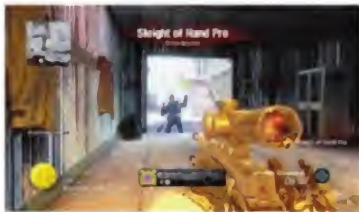
STICKS AND STONES

Each player gets a crossbow, a ballistic knife and a tomahawk. Tomahawk kills are the key. The killer gets no points, but the victim loses *all* of his. It's a brave man who takes an early lead, as the rest will be gunning for your scalp.



GUN GAME

Skilled all-rounders will love Gun Game. The aim is to progress through a set series of 20 weapons faster than anyone else. Getting a kill with one weapon, switches you onto the next, but falling victim to a melee kill sets you back one.



SHARPSHOOTER

This mode is a gambler's game, as every player gets the same random weapon, which changes at regular intervals. There are tons of possibilities, as the upgrades are random, too. Another good one for all-rounders.



With great power

MotorStorm developer says first-party teams have responsibility to push the hardware

First-party devs have a duty to push the PS3 hardware harder and further than anyone else, according to *MotorStorm: Apocalypse* director Matt Southern. Speaking to *Play*, Southern insisted that it was important as a Sony-owned studio to be more ambitious than everyone else, but also help others get the most from the hardware. In this instance that's meant dynamic environments, 3DTV compatibility, user-generated content and Hollywood-style effects.

"I think it's really important for first-party developers to show everybody else what's possible, to have levels of ambition that are

still achievable, but signpost what you can do with the machine," Southern explained. "And we're happy to share knowledge about that and make it crystal clear that PS3 is evolving and the more we get to grips with it the more incredible things we can do with it."

With its *COD*-inspired effects and community-driven multiplayer it's clear *MotorStorm* is heading in a similar direction to *Blur* and *Split/Second*, but Southern also expressed his determination to see that as a challenge to rise to rather than one to shrink away from. "When we learned about those titles [*Split/Second* and *Blur*] we could've changed things and said, 'we need to do

Southern Twang

More words of wisdom from the *MotorStorm* game director

"I love *OutRun* and *Mario Kart* and I really liked *OutRun: Coast 2 Coast*, which I thought was fantastic. You can probably tell I'm not too much of a sim fan."

"It's a bit like playing online against somebody who's on a standard-def CRT TV. You've got a competitive advantage if you've got a 50-inch HDTV. You've also now got a competitive edge if you're playing in 3D, but it's more on the level of intuition rather than any form of cheating."

"It isn't just a case of switching on the 3D button. Technically there's not a lot of work, but creatively there are some challenges, such as making sure those levels of depth are right. You can have an object right out in the foreground, but it would give you a headache very quickly and we've balanced that very carefully."

something different," he said. "We've got massive respect for those devs, one of them [Bizarre Creations] is ten minutes away and we know them really well. However, we said, 'let's try to do it better, let's have more spectacle, let's be more ambitious, more epic and let's have more depth in the online experience.' We are also taking our inspiration from the *Modern Warfare*'s of the world, but let's just try to do it even better."

word on the tweet



DoktorZee
"Happy the Arsenal 'kids' beat the Spurs 'kids'. It was a top-quality beating!"
And with that BioWare's Greg Zeschuk broke PlayMag Jon's heart.

Dreams come true?

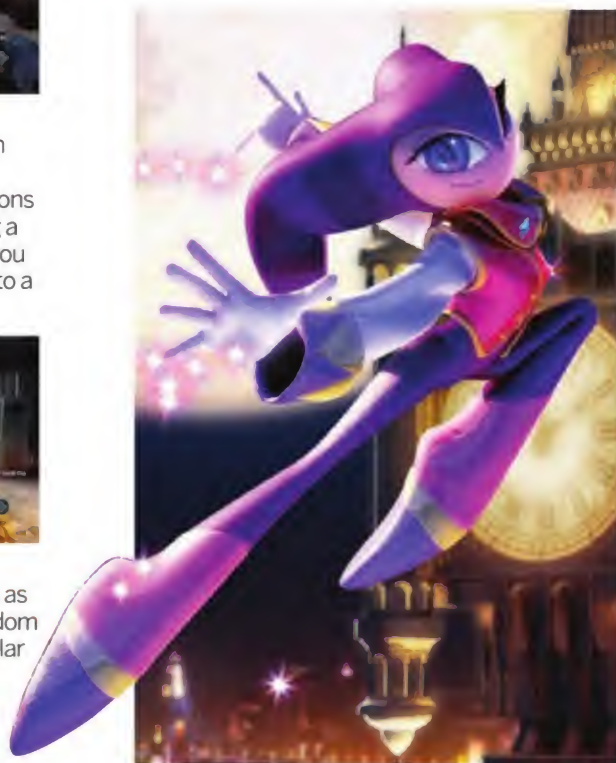
Sonic Team producer could see NiGHTS working with Move

In an exclusive interview with *Play* recently, *NiGHTS Into Dreams* and *Journey Of Dreams* mastermind Takashi Iizuka admitted he could see his cult classic title working well with Sony's recently released motion controller. The original *Into Dreams* title was released on the Sega Saturn, creating a sizeable fan base, and was even remade for PS2 in 2008, but released only in Japan.

He seemed particularly interested in the level of accuracy Move offers. "I do think that a PlayStation Move version of *NiGHTS* would work, because the

controls would probably be similar to the Wii game," Iizuka admitted. "I can see the potential of PlayStation Move as it's more precise for pointing."

NiGHTS: Journey Into Dreams was released on Nintendo Wii in 2008 and in a conversation with our sister magazine *games™* this summer he revealed that he would love to make a sequel. Unfortunately, Iizuka wouldn't be drawn on whether it was actually likely to happen. "We don't have any plans to release *NiGHTS* on a PlayStation platform," he told us.

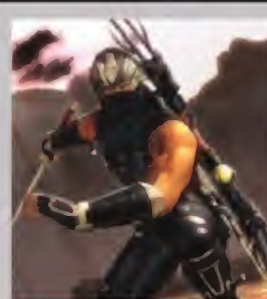


REASONS WHY...

Ninja Gaiden III is a game to watch



BLOODIER THAN EVER *Ninja Gaiden* has long been associated with violence and blood-letting at least until the last PS3 version, which saw much of its gore removed. Team Ninja is promising a very bloody outing this time.



BEHIND THE MASK While details on the next Ryu Hayabusa instalment are limited, Team Ninja has suggested that you'll be seeing his more human side and that could mean him taking off that iconic mask. Risky, but perhaps essential.



NEW TEAM With Tomonobu Itagaki long gone, Team Ninja has seen its members rise to the challenge with a bunch of fresh faces taking the helm. That means new ideas and a new outlook.



ON THE OFFENSIVE Ryu Hayabusa has been taking it to the demonic forces of the world for quite some time, but it would seem he'll be taking his fight straight to those enemies this time around with hints he'll be heading down into hell to take them on.



FRESH START We enjoyed *Ninja Gaiden Sigma II*, but it was beginning to lose its way. The introduction of subsidiary characters and the cutting of gory content watered down the experience. A fresh start could be just what the series needs.



QUESTION?

What should we expect from PSP 2?

DESPITE SONY'S BEST efforts it would seem that the PSP 2 has been outed. Since we can now be pretty sure that a new PSP is on the horizon it only remains to ask what should we expect from it?

Power!



According to *Mortal Kombat* executive producer Shaun

Himmerick the PSP 2 is looking very nice on the grunt side of things. "The PSP 2 looks like it's a pretty powerful machine," he said.

Touching the rear



Another rumour is the use of touch technology,

but mounted on the back of the PSP 2. The reason for this is so that your fingers don't obscure the screen and all the pretty pictures it's trying to show you.

Taking control



A rear-mounted touch interface would offer all sorts of new ways to play. Of course many

PSP owners would settle on just having a second analogue stick to play with so that FPS titles would make more sense.

Say cheese



With *Invizimals* getting a sequel and *EyePet* making its way to the

PSP, it's clear Sony is backing augmented reality as a future strength of the handheld market. To back that properly it could build in a camera to the hardware.

Mobile gaming



In-built 3G is another common rumour allowing for

online gaming on the move. Trouble is 3G connections aren't always reliable enough to offer the kind of seamless gaming experience you would want.

ANSWER:

Expect the unexpected. This could get interesting

Homebrewed levels

Media Molecule will be making some of the first community levels in LBP 2

Media Molecule's Mark Healey has revealed to **Play** that some of the first community-made levels in *LittleBigPlanet 2* will actually be made by the development team.

Healey explained that it should be a good way for Media Molecule to release some of the creative ideas that didn't fit into the main story of the game. "All the time while we're doing this it's like, 'I understand why we're doing this, but I'm desperate to make Super Destructoid Mega-Chicken or something,'" he said. "You're always thinking about all the other things you want to make that won't fit."

The MM team will get its chance once the game goes gold before release. "What we're going to do once we finish our story is unleash all the designers to sort of seed in the community so they get a chance to go mad and do whatever they want," Healey explained. "And they'll be some of the first LBP 2-published levels."

With the incredible creative potential LBP 2 offers we can't even begin to imagine what amazing things those guys will create, but it will all be online waiting for you when Sackboy returns to PlayStation 3 next year and it will all be free.





Sackboy would be proud

Knitting and gaming come together in one amazing package

WE WERE RECENTLY pointed in the direction of some amazing YouTube guides for making your own cuddly videogame characters on a website called PigCorner.com. These

amazingly cute and detailed re-creations of popular characters are adorable, so we got in touch with their creator Nikki to find out what inspired her. "I had given up YouTube and I was trying to think of what to do during my spare time,"

she said. "I'd been crocheting on and off since I was in grade school and I thought that I would pick it up again. The first doll I made was a Totoro. I had followed a pattern online and I noticed that the pattern for the grey one was missing, so I decided to make one from scratch. Then some time after that I remember seeing

LittleBigPlanet on adverts.

That's when I really started to experiment."

Since then she's made versions of Kratos and Ico and then offers up her guides to make them yourself for free.

"When I first started making dolls I made them because I had some sort of connection with the character," she explained.

"I've either seen that character in an anime I loved or a game I really enjoyed playing. Recently the ideas come from requests my viewers have. I look to see if the character is fairly popular and if I can actually make it."

You can check out the designs and perhaps be inspired to make a few of your own at PigCorner.com.



Full circle

BioShock and co help pave the way for Deus Ex's return

In a recent exclusive interview with **Play**, David Anfossi, producer of *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* for Eidos Montreal, offered his thanks to games such as *BioShock*, *Mass Effect* and *Fallout 3* for helping make his team's sequel possible. The original *Deus Ex* titles have been considered

The key issue is that breaking into the games market with challenging games can be incredibly hard, but these titles from Irrational Games, BioWare and Bethesda have helped establish the market in this generation of consoles. "Thank you guys," Anfossi exclaimed when asked about the

Breaking into the games market with challenging games can be very hard

by many to have been a huge influence on this recent rise of mature games and now, according to Anfossi, that influence has come full circle.

impact such titles have had on the sector. "It's amazing because it's difficult to open the market and to educate the player about this unique kind of experience. It involves making sure players understand the world and after that how to play your game."

BioShock in particular brought together similar gameplay ideas (FPS game with RPG elements) and themes (conspiracy, political extremism) and Anfossi believes that thanks to these games reintroducing such ideas to a modern audience, players won't be as daunted by the scope of what *Deus Ex* offers. "At the first viewing it could appear to be very complex with the stealth, combat, hacking and social interaction and everything," he admitted. "Players might not be sure about all that. But we don't have to do this kind of education and it's thanks to *BioShock*, *Mass Effect* and *Fallout 3*. Thank you very much guys."

Win a PS3 gaming chair!

Boys Stuff gives away stuff for boys (and girls)

Fed up of your boring old armchair? Not getting the most out of that gaming bean bag? Then we just might have a solution for you – the X-Dream Gyroxus PS3 Gaming Chair. We've been reliably informed that this is the only gyroscopic PS3 gaming chair available. With no motors or power assistance of any kind, the Gyroxus still manages to deliver a realistic simulator experience for racing, sports, flying and combat games.

The chair comes complete with a customised PS3 wireless controller (you can also buy an Xbox 360 controller if you bat

for both teams) and there are no drivers to install. If you like the sound of all of that but lack the funds to make the dream a reality, then pay attention as there's still a chance you could be moving with the action after all as we've teamed up with www.BoysStuff.co.uk to give away a chair (RRP £399.99) to one lucky reader.

To be in with a chance of winning send us the answer to this simple question:

What is the name of the seat that allows you to map controls in *LittleBigPlanet 2*?

- A) The Controlinator
- B) The Chairanator
- C) The Sackanator

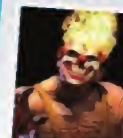
Terms And Conditions

To submit your answer, simply email play@imagine-publishing.co.uk with the subject line 'Boys Stuff' plus your name and address. The closing date for entries is 24 November 2010. Please be aware that answers must be submitted to the above email address only, and any left through the comments section of this website will be automatically disqualified.

This competition is open to residents of the United Kingdom and Ireland. Imagine Publishing has the right to substitute the prize for a similar item of equal or higher value. Employees of Imagine Publishing (including freelancers), their relatives, or any agents are not eligible to enter. The editor's decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into. Prizes cannot be exchanged for cash. Full terms and conditions are available upon request.

From time to time, Imagine Publishing or its agents may send you related material or special offers. If you do not want to receive this, please state it clearly on your competition entry.

word on the tweet



davidscottjaffe

"Anyone know if there is still an online community for the last *Transformers* game, either on PS3 or 360? I dug it but haven't played in a while"

Twisted Metal creator David Jaffe needs his automotive destruction fix.

INSTANT EXPERT

All of the pros with none of the prose



WHAT WE WANT TO SEE

What's the PSN missing? These few things at least

1 Move tech demos

Along the lines of the Move Minis we asked for before, we would like to see tech demos à la those shown at numerous trade shows over the last year or so coming to PSN. Shooting goblins! Things like that!



2 Cross-game chat

This pops in and out of these mini-charts, but it's back. Why can't we chat with our friends who are playing other games? Why is this so hard to implement? Also: when it does come, it had better be free.



3 More 3D stuff

Following 3D Blu-ray support and 3D photo support, why not make everything 3D? We don't actually have TVs that are capable of 3D yet, but what the hell – you may as well take advantage of the technology.



4 Minecraft

It's an indie darling in the PC community and has made its creator in excess of \$3 million. Also it's a game where you can build things. And mine. And, well, it's better than we're making it sound.

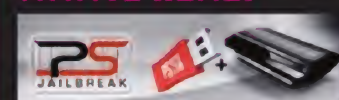


5 PS2 classics

It's all well and good re-mastering (cult) classics and bringing them out on Blu-ray, but why don't Sony give a chance to all the other PS2 games and bring them to PSN? Cheaper, quicker, easier, better?



WWWT5 news:



We hoped Sony would see sense and allow wider exploration of homebrew applications on the system. Based on its reaction to PS Jailbreak, that's not going to happen.

DOS & DON'TS

Important lessons from Play this month



Read our reviews of all these games starting on page 80



DO: Seek out and hang onto the Incinerator in *Fallout: New Vegas*, it's one tasty weapon.



DON'T: Go to war without a respectable amount of facial hair in *Medal Of Honor*.



DO: Create a Wanzer that looks like *Transformers'* Optimus Prime in *Front Mission Evolved*.



DON'T: Button bash in *MMA* as it won't get you far. It's all about balancing pressure and stamina.

● We're still waiting for *Yakuza 4* over here.

Yakuza

Q&A

Sega's *Yakuza* producer Masayoshi Kikuchi talks exclusively to *Play* on the eve of a fresh *Yakuza* announcement at TGS about where the series has been and where it will go in the future

After five years you've managed to produce six games on three different PlayStation formats. What do you think has made that possible?

I have to tie it to the brilliant staff that we have on the development team. We have really good programmers, designers, level designers, artists and all of them are not just good at their jobs, they are also able to think independently and make judgements. As producer I obviously give

find the plots and events realistic. I think that's been one of the big contributions to the success of each instalment.

Have you been surprised by the success of the *Yakuza* games in the West given its deep interest in Japanese culture? Do you think its that very cultural insight that's made it so interesting to Westerners?

I am surprised to see *Yakuza's* success in the West, but I wouldn't mind if it sold a bit more. I think it's understandable although it is a very Japanese game, based

in Japan, based in an underground society of Japan. This is not a Hollywood quality, mass market sort of game and in a way it is a niche title. However, there are a certain amount of people who continue to support this series and I think one factor is the Japanese-ness of this game. We see other games that are set in American gang culture like the Italian Mafia. *Yakuza* has a similar sort of theme, but since we don't have any other games that are set on Japanese syndicates I think this is one factor in the success of the series.

Were you also surprised by the reaction of American and European gamers when it was announced features such as the hostess bars

were being removed from their release of *Yakuza 3*?

We were definitely surprised by that reaction. The reason we removed things like the hostess bars from *Yakuza 3* was that we didn't think that things like that would appeal to a Western audience and in a way we thought we were doing a good thing. We wanted to make the game simpler and easier to accept for each market. We were surprised to see almost the exact opposite reaction from users.

With *Yakuza 5* on the way there has been chatter that this could be the end of the franchise. Do you think *Yakuza* still has enough about it to

STAT ATTACK
1 billion
The estimated value in pounds of 3D TV business by 2014

keep going? Where do you see it moving in the future?

I believe in the prosperity of this series and I believe this series has the potential to keep going. Unfortunately, one particular title has not been released in the West to date, but we have made a spin-off of this series based in a slightly different setting using a similar world view and system [*Ryū Ga Gotoku Kenzan!* was a *Yakuza* game based in 1605 Japan, released in 2008]. So, there's always a possibility of more games and new ideas coming up from developers. I'm personally hopeful that we can keep making *Yakuza* games.

This is not a Hollywood quality, mass market sort of game and in a way it is a niche title

directions, but once I give them a general direction of what the game is about they are able to work at pace and make the game a success.

How important do you feel *Yakuza's* authenticity has been to the series' success over the years?

I'm not sure how authentic we've been in our depiction of yakuza society because, even in Japan, the inner workings of the yakuza are somewhat mysterious. Not many people in Japan know what goes on in yakuza organisations, so I don't think we can make a truthful judgement about authenticity, but underground societies and criminal organisations are very popular themes and I'm hopeful that people who've played the series will

● The *Yakuza* series has proved more popular than expected in the West.

Cataloguing everything that's big in the world of PlayStation

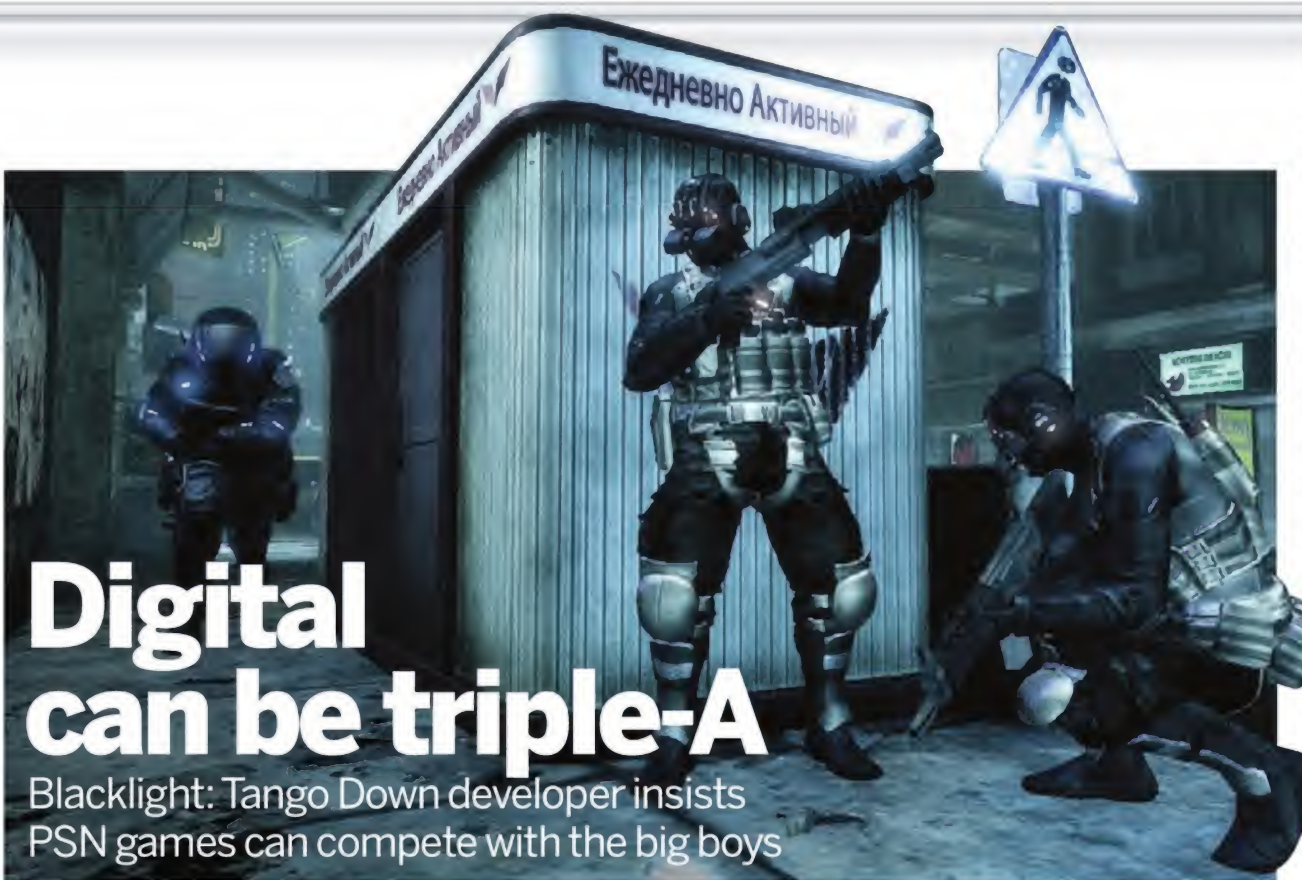
PS3 CHART

	1 FIFA 11 EA As expected EA's premier football series stormed straight to the top of the charts. 91%
	2 Medal Of Honor EA Superb opening from EA's rebooted series, fighting off controversy to win over FPS fans. 86%
	3 Fallout: New Vegas Bethesda A very strong opening for New Vegas despite only a short time on sale. 88%
	4 Vanquish Sega The wealth of excitement has helped to push PlatinumGames' latest up the chart. 93%
	5 PES 2011 Konami The buzz for the latest PES was strong, but it hasn't developed enough to challenge FIFA. 73%
	6 Enslaved: Odyssey To The West Namco Bandai It's good to see Ninja Theory's latest game get the attention that it clearly deserves. 83%
	7 Mafia II 2K A wealth of top-quality titles in the last month has seen Mafia get toppled from the summit. 81%
	8 Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow Konami Well worth a punt whether you're an old-school Castlevania fan or not. Be warned, though - it's tough. 85%
	9 Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2 Activision With just one month to go before Black Ops arrives Modern Warfare 2 remains a favourite. 94%
	10 Red Dead Redemption Rockstar The addition of new DLC could see Red Dead hold on to its chart position for some time. 92%

PSP CHART

	1 FIFA 11 EA Much like its bigger HD release, there was no doubting that FIFA on PSP would go straight to the top. 69%
	2 Kingdom Hearts: Birth By Sleep Square Enix Square's most recent masterpiece is still holding strong. 88%
	3 Valkyria Chronicles II Sega There's more Valkyria Chronicles coming to PSP no doubt in part due to this game's strong showing. 87%
	4 Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker Konami Still one of the best games ever to be released on PSP and still selling strong. 92%
	5 LittleBigPlanet Sony Play, Create, Share continues to have a presence in the chart. Hopefully we'll see some more with LBP 2. 90%

*This chart is compiled from sales, our opinions and the games you're playing. If you're playing a recent, quality title that isn't on our chart, head on over to the forum and let us know about it.



Digital can be triple-A

Blacklight: Tango Down developer insists PSN games can compete with the big boys

Speaking exclusively with Play, the maker of *Blacklight: Tango Down*, Zombie Studios, has insisted that downloadable games can compete with disc releases. Project lead Jared Gerritzen

"We really feel digital distribution is the next generation of gaming," Gerritzen told us. "Look at the music industry. I can't think of the last time I went to a music store. I buy everything online." The figures

added Gerritzen. "I would say that is the bestselling triple-A retail DLC of all time. People want to play games, it really doesn't matter how they get it as long as it's easy to access and easy to use." Of course there remains the challenge of hard-drive capacity and download speeds that continue to make digital distribution troublesome for some PS3 owners.

Download speeds make digital distribution troublesome

explained that examples from the music industry as well as the success of digital releases on PC proves that gamers want their entertainment delivered digitally.

market and it seems to be getting just as popular for games.

"Look at *StarCraft II*, I don't know anyone that bought a hard copy."

prove that while disc sales remain a part of music sales, download dominates the

word on the tweet

TheKevinButler
"Who invented the term 'joystick'? It sounds like something I would say as a joke."
A fine question from Sony's Kevin Butler. The answer is a French pilot named Robert Esnault-Pelterie.

Good to be gory

Splatterhouse developer enjoying the freedom of its violent retro update

The carefree gore and violence of Namco Bandai's upcoming *Splatterhouse* has been a joy according to the game's producer. In an exclusive chat with Play, Dan Tovar explained how the game's deliberately juvenile humour and gore was revealing interesting things about the minds of its dev team and leading to plenty of jokes in the meantime.

"Punching stuff until it explodes and watching the bloody results, we all crack up at this stuff," Tovar confessed. "The conversations we have sitting in a room talking about these horrible and hysterical things you can do to creatures, monsters and what will happen to Rick has

been incredibly entertaining. You'd never expect this stuff to come out of some peoples' mouths and yet all these thoughts reside in there."

Such freedom of expression isn't that common even in the games industry according to Tovar. "It's like everyone has these thoughts that they don't ever act on or utter because perhaps it's not appropriate for the workplace," he said. "For us that is encouraged. That's not to say that everybody's juvenile or immature, but the game is what it is and everybody embraced that and nobody tried to make it too sophisticated or overcomplicate it. It's supposed to be fun and straightforward."



After a lean spell, Japanese games are getting people excited again.



TGS RISES FROM THE GRAVE

Japan's biggest game show makes a comeback

OUR MAN IN JAPAN

PlayStation pondering from the East

Another Tokyo Game Show has come and gone, and this year's show was better than last year's. Which is to say, it didn't suck. TGS has come a long way from the days when it was the most important videogame trade show in the world. There was a time when gamers waited with baited breath on news from Tokyo and TGS, not LA and E3. It came twice a year and every fall,



Ni No Kuni debuts

The PS3 version of *Ni No Kuni*, a collaboration between Level-5 (*Professor Layton*, *Dragon Quest IX*) and Studio Ghibli's (*Princess Mononoke*, *Spirited Away*), originally announced for the DS, was confirmed in June but only shown in video form. The game is simple and kid friendly, but looks almost like a moving anime. Don't hold your breath for a Western release just yet. I wouldn't expect one until at least early 2012.

Nintendo rode on the coattails of the rest of the industry and held its own event around the second TGS of the year.

However, over time, as E3 and gamescom gained importance and Japanese companies stumbled in Western markets, TGS shrank in size and became a once-a-year deal. The numbers of booths and exhibition halls were reduced and it all seemed to come to a head last year, when the assembled Western press looked around the show floor and said to each other, "This is it?"

TGS 2009 was abysmal – all the major games, from *MGS: Peace Walker* to *Lost Planet 2* seemed to be aping *Monster Hunter*, a series that is huge in Japan, but merely has a cult following in the rest of the world. Only a few announcements were made, and it was hard to argue with Capcom's Kenji Inafune, when he said, "Japan is finished."

Flash-forward to this year's show and things don't look as grim. While no one would say that 2010 was a return to form, it was a marked improvement over last year, and more than a few cool announcements came out. *Gran Turismo Sport* made its (hopefully) final TGS showing, with awesome real-time weather effects unveiled. Capcom unveiled a new take on *Devil May Cry* by *Heavenly Sword* creator Ninja Theory. CyberConnect, maker of the 'good' *Naruto* games, unveiled *Asura's Wrath*, a badass character action game that takes its cues from *Fist Of The North Star* and *Dragon Ball*. Sony put *Tokyo Jungle* on display, an odd 2D side-



2010's show was a huge improvement on recent TGSs.

scroller where you play as a Pomeranian in post-apocalyptic Tokyo. *MGS: Rising* made its 3D debut, a feature only available on the PS3. The collaboration between *Killer7*'s Suda51 and *Resident Evil*'s Shinji Mikami was revealed as *Shadows Of The Damned*, a horror-themed action game that borrows more than a little from Robert Rodriguez and Quentin Tarantino. Finally, *Vanquish*, *Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow* and *Fallout: New Vegas* made playable showings before their release.

So TGS isn't back to its old self, but it's showing improvement. Kind of like the Japanese game industry as a whole. While they were the kings of games in previous generations, they stumbled and

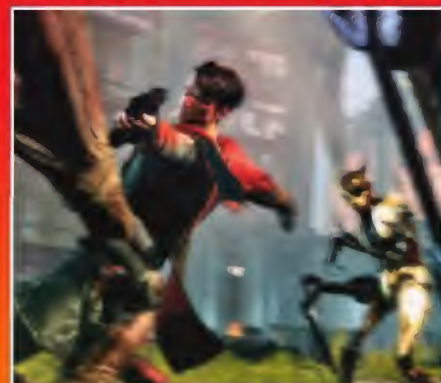
TGS isn't back to its old self, but it's showing improvement

fell on hard times when the shift to high-def happened. Now, after what seemed like an eternity, the game makers of Japan and Tokyo Game Show are ready to show us what they can do again.

Level-5 and Capcom working together

Speaking of Level-5, as if Studio Ghibli wasn't a big enough collaborator, it turns out the dev is teaming up with Capcom as well. In an interview with business news site Diamond Online both Capcom's Kenji Inafune and Level-5's Akihiro Hino are working together on some "truly interesting things."

Neither Inafune or Hino elaborated on what those interesting things are, or when we'll get a chance to check them out ourselves.



INSIDE EVERY MACHINE BEATS THE HEART OF MAN.

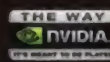
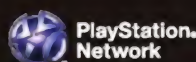
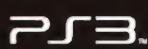


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{The Vault}

OBJECTS OF DESIRE

The toys, trinkets and tailoring that has our fires burning this month



DC Universe Online Statues

From £62.99 at ForbiddenPlanet.com

Batman and Catwoman are the first characters from upcoming MMO *DC Universe Online* to get some statue tribute. Their designs seem to have been based on the art of DC's Jim Lee who is something of a comic legend. Anyway, more of these should follow from November onwards.



Bad Boy ++

£23.50 at MySoti.com

You may not be old enough to remember *He-Man* (do they still show that cartoon?), but hopefully you know how badass his nemesis Skeletor was. Pay tribute with this shirt.



Yo Monkey!

£19.59 at MySoti.com

Hip-hop monkeys: is there anything better? We don't think so and it makes us wonder why there isn't a videogame about it. We're copyrighting that idea.



Iron Man Headphones

£39.99 at HeadphoneWorld.com

If you're looking for a stylish and geeky way to enjoy your late-night gaming sessions without disturbing others, then Marvel's range of comic hero headphones could be exactly the thing you're looking for. Our pick of the bunch is this *Iron Man* pair.



The Art Of Uncharted 2

£51.49 at Amazon.co.uk

If you thought *Uncharted 2* was a good-looking game then take it from us that the artwork that helped to inspire it was even better. As collections of videogame concept art go this is one of the best around with plenty of extra info included.



Yoda Lightsaber

£195 at BattleOrders.co.uk

Lightsaber replicas are commonplace, but it's been a long time coming that we finally get our hands on Yoda's weapon... so to speak. Anyway, this replica is very high quality and based on the Jedi Master's *Revenge Of The Sith* appearance. Definitely one for the hardcore fan.

Mass Effect 2 Action Figures

£14.99 each at Play.com

We can finally admit how much we like *Mass Effect 2*! It's a great time to be a PS3 owner as BioWare's superb RPG is finally coming to the console and we can also enjoy these excellent action figures produced by DC Comics. Series one includes Shepard, Tali, Grunt and Thane with more to come.



CONDITIONS: Enter discount code when placing order. MySoti.com discount code only valid on featured items between 28 October and 24 November. Visit MySoti.com for even more great T-shirts.



Alicia Melchiott Figure

£55.57 at Play-Asia.com

We'd like to think there's even more love out there for *Valkyria Chronicles* following the superb PSP release of *Valkyria Chronicles II*. This is by far the best figure we've seen based on the Sega RPG, but we hope it will lead to more down the line.



Death Star Trash Compactor Book Ends

£134.99 at Play.com

There's never a shortage of superb *Star Wars* memorabilia and it just seems to be getting more and more imaginative as time goes by. Take these bookends inspired by the Death Star trash compactor scene from *A New Hope*. We think they're pretty clever.

Tron Legacy Smart Disc

\$22.99 at BigBad ToyStore.com

It's the sport of digital kings and one you'll be seeing plenty of with the release of *Tron Legacy* this Christmas and this Smart Disc replica will light up and make noises as you swing it around. We still like things that light up and make noise.

Lara Croft Figure

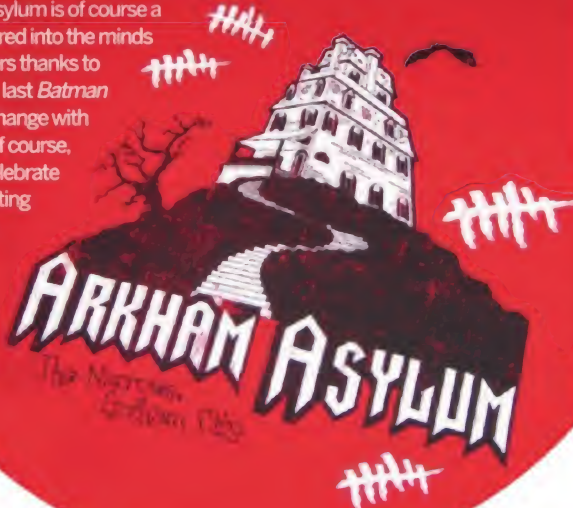
£13.99 at Play.com

It's good to see that after all these years on the PlayStation Lara isn't going anywhere and could even be finding a second lease of life thanks to PSN. If you're a lifelong Croft fan then you probably already have this figure, but if you don't then there's really no excuse for not getting it now.

Arkham Asylum Shirt

£19 at Nerdoh.co.uk

The sometime home of all Batman's greatest adversaries, Arkham Asylum is of course a location seared into the minds of PS3 gamers thanks to Rocksteady's last *Batman* game. It's all change with *Arkham City* of course, but you can celebrate the classic setting with this shirt.



HIGH FIVE

Five of the best... gaming comics

Metal Gear Solid Omnibus

£14.13 at Amazon.co.uk

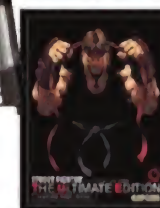


This is one of the most unique-looking comic books out there, let alone the most unique based on videogames. For the art alone we would recommend it,

but it also helps develop the stories of Solid Snake and the rest of the *Metal Gear* cast.

Street Fighter: The Ultimate Edition

£29.25 at Amazon.co.uk



Put together by the legendary Udon Crew (who were also responsible for the updated characters in *Super Street Fighter II Turbo*

HD Remix) the *Street Fighter* comics are superb examples of manga and good videogame/comic crossovers.

Silent Hill Omnibus

£55.95 at Play.com



Another very peculiar comic style comes from the *Silent Hill* books, but then the series really invites a more novel approach. Anyway, if you like taking journeys into

the dark recesses of the human mind then you really should take a look at this book.

God Of War

£8.85 at Play.com



This collection of Kratos comics won't be available until March 2011, which tells you how late this series came about really. It's surprising because you would have thought the

Ghost Of Sparta would be the perfect comic book antihero.

Tomb Raider: Saga Of The Medusa Mask

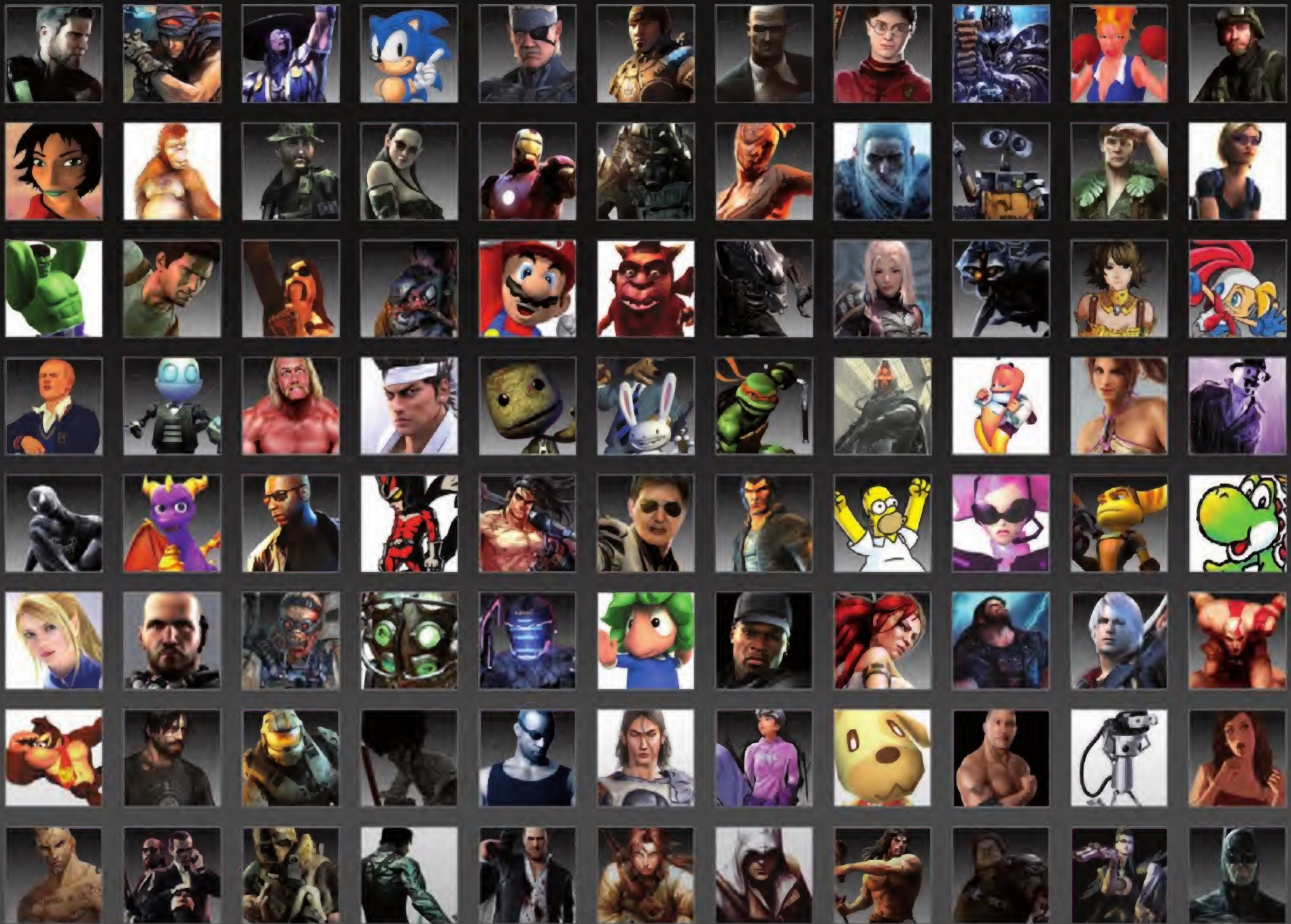
£7.50 at TheBookDepository.co.uk



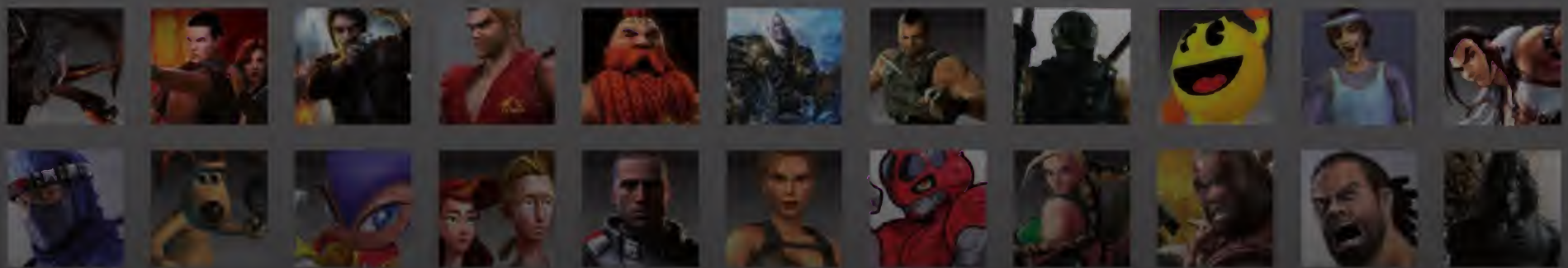
When Top Cow (makers of *The Darkness* and *Witchblade*) captured the rights to produce the *Tomb Raider* comic it was a real coup. DC and Marvel

wanted a piece of Lara Croft, but the move meant some really edgy material and amazing artwork.

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STAT ATTACK
60,000
estimated US
sales of Move in
its first week

stop 
please



Brain training

THEY SAY: Yet another medical report is claiming that games are actually good for your brain. The University of Rochester claims gaming can improve decision speed by 25 per cent.

WE SAY: Given how long it takes Jon to order a sandwich for lunch we find this claim rather hard to believe.

PSP2 OUTED!

Shock as PSP successor is said to be in hands of developers

THEY SAY: According to *Mortal Kombat* dev NetherRealm the PSP2 is real and it has a dev kit in the offices. "We have a PSP2 in the house and we're looking at the engine," said executive Shaun Himmerick, speaking to IndustryGamers.com in September. "PSP2 looks like it's a pretty powerful machine." This unexpected piece of news follows months of speculation about the future of the PSP and rumours of an announcement buzzing around every media event, be it E3, gamescom or TGS. It's now believed that Sony has sent dev kits for the PSP2 to first and third-party developers around the world.

WE SAY: It seems more and more like the PSP2 is another example of one of Sony's worst-kept secrets, somewhere up there with *Resistance 3*, PSPgo and the return of *Twisted Metal*. Whatever the truth of it, Sony is keeping its mouth closed, refusing to comment on all the rumour and speculation even after someone has come out and said they have the new handheld clasped in their mits. The question we're asking on **Play** now is whether Sony will decide to never release the PSP2 and just pretend forever that it never existed. That would be quite amusing.



Political games

THEY SAY: Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg showed off how in touch he and his party were with the public by playing Nintendo Wii games during the Liberal Democrat conference in Liverpool recently.

WE SAY: If these politicians were really in touch with what's going on in gaming they would have been playing with Move instead.

INCEPTION GAME COMING

Nolan dreaming of turning his cinema hit into game

THEY SAY: *Inception* and *Dark Knight* director Christopher Nolan thinks his universe could translate really well into a videogame and is thinking of ways to adapt it. "One thing we are looking at doing is developing a videogame based on the world of the film, which has all kinds of ideas that you can't fit into a feature film," Nolan told *Variety*. The game would not be based directly on the movie, but would instead be an extension of it dealing with the same mechanics of entering into people's dreams to steal information.

WE SAY: It does seem like the kind of universe that would translate really well to a game format, offering all sorts of possibilities. For instance, dying in the game would mean going to a different level that you would have to fight your way out of to make it back to the main mission again. You shouldn't expect anything soon, though. "That's something we've been talking about and are looking at doing in a couple of years," Nolan concluded.



Prince of Peckham

THEY SAY: *Prince Of Persia* very nearly got a post-apocalyptic reboot according to current *Deus Ex* art director Jonathan Jacques-Belletête who had worked with Ubisoft on the project before it was canned.

WE SAY: Some have said it was a close escape, but we would have welcomed a fresher take on the *Prince Of Persia* franchise.

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Reload

The very best of the Play Blog this month

If in doubt, just add ZOMBIES

THE REVELATION THAT *Yakuza* will include zombies got me thinking about a blog I wrote earlier in the year about how zombies were at last becoming a dead concept. The catalyst for this discussion was a series of ads for a rail network that warned commuters 'Don't Go Zombie'.

Yakuza's news from the latest *Famitsu* really only confirms my worst fears that zombies have become the go-to solution for anyone running out of ideas.

I could write it off as a 'Japanese dev thing,' but I don't think that's it. The inclusion of Nazi Zombies in *World At War* is just one example of how the undead have become the butt of the joke rather than a genuinely innovative or frightening concept.

Now we have *Blood Drive* coming from Activision, which pits weaponised cars against streets full of zombies, we have zombies in space and in multiplayer



thanks to

Dead Space 2, even *Scott Pilgrim Vs The World* had a zombie score attack mode.

I guess the point I'm getting at is that I now find it hard to take any game with zombies in it seriously. They feel cheap and throwaway to me now.

Yakuza is going to have its work cut out convincing me this is a good idea. Perhaps the issue here is that I have the wrong impression of *Yakuza*. Perhaps *Yakuza* isn't as serious a game as I thought. If so, then this move towards the undead would be easier to stomach.

<http://bit.ly/gmvtqa>

5 games (out of dozens) that are bigger than Halo

<http://bit.ly/cyemtt>

CORPORATE VICE PRESIDENT of Microsoft Game Studios Phil Spencer recently claimed that "no game is bigger than *Halo*". He bases this claim on wishy-washy ideas like *Halo's* "size and scope" and "the dedication of the fans" and not, of course, on anything resembling facts.

Actual unit sales figures are, of course, not an exact measure of size, scope or dedication, but they are about as close as you can get, and just a quick look over some reveals that Mr Spencer has completely lost all sense of perspective and reality. A lot of games are bigger than *Halo*.

Even if you limit comparisons to the current generation (DS, PSP, Wii, PS3, 360) and rule out casual titles that are arguably not games, it's still easy to find bigger games than *Halo*. There are more than five, and there are many that sold a lot more than these five. I just thought that choosing five games that didn't outsell *Halo 3* (which sold about 8 million) by that much illustrated the point more clearly. It's like, 'Hey Phil, get real, even these are bigger than *Halo*'...

ANIMAL CROSSING: WILD WORLD DS 11 MILLION



It's a game about a small village, inhabited by small animals with small ambitions and a small console, but it's still bigger than *Halo*.

GRAND THEFT AUTO IV MULTI 15 MILLION



We knew Michael Pachter had no idea what he was talking about when he said Rockstar delayed *GTA IV* into 2008 because it considered *Halo 3* to be a threat. Ha!

CALL OF DUTY: WORLD AT WAR MULTI 13.5 MILLION



Call Of Duty is so much bigger than *Halo* that even its third-bestselling iteration so far, the controversial *World At War*, has trumped *Halo 3* by over 5 million sales.

NEW SUPER MARIO BROS. WII Wii 16 MILLION



Of the two *New Super Mario Bros.* games, the Wii version is the smallest, yet it's still about twice as big as *Halo*. Oh, but wait, Phil's right – *Mario* fans aren't that dedicated. Sure...

SUPER SMASH BROS. BRAWL Wii 9.5 MILLION



Nintendo just throws together all of its characters into a fun but ultimately shallow fighting game and it still manages to create something bigger than *Halo*.

STAT ATTACK
377
million consoles
sold by Sony in
15 years

Earth Defence Force: Insect Armageddon – why you should care

ONE THING WE miss on the PS3 is the ability to detonate giant ants and to incinerate leaping (giant) spiders. We don't have *Earth Defence Force 2017* on PS3, so there's nothing to sate these desires. That is, unless *Earth Defence Force: Insect Armageddon* makes its way to Sony's console.

The last game in the series, exclusive to 360, was unpolished, didn't look great and commonly dropped to about four frames per second. It remains one of the best examples of 'pure fun' gaming. The satisfaction that comes with getting a huge rocket launcher and levelling a skyscraper in trying to bring down a marauding alien robot is something that most games don't even bother trying to emulate these days. This makes us sad. *Insect Armageddon's* recent tease at PAX makes us very, very happy.

The original two *Earth Defence Force* games – known as *Global Defence Force* and *Monster Attack* – were released on PS2. There have been no platforms announced for the new game, but we really do hope it makes its way to PS3.

It's one of the most ridiculous, over the top and downright stupid series ever made. This is why you should care. For a soldier to say: "We're on an exciting underground adventure!" while a part of an invasion force sent to destroy a subterranean hive inhabited by ants the size of double decker buses... it just beggars belief why this isn't the most popular set of games ever made.

EDF: Insect Armageddon – we know nothing about you, but we're ridiculously excited by you.

<http://bit.ly/dcdpg>

Ninja Theory: Studio visit photos

WE WENT TO see *Enslaved*, and at the time we had no idea *DmC* was in development at the Cambridge studio. Check out our awesome images.



<http://bit.ly/94hwnz>

Gaming's top 5 hoes (and other gardening tools)

5 GOLDEN SHOVEL *ANIMAL CROSSING*



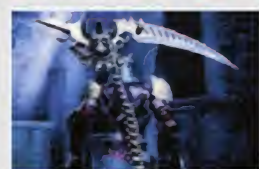
A regular shovel will do if you just want to dig ordinary holes, but if you want to plant bells and grow bell trees – and let's face it, who doesn't? – you absolutely must have a golden shovel.

4 PITCHFORK *RESIDENT EVIL 4*



The pitchfork isn't just for angry peasants, it's a symbol of rural mob mentality. If you see a man with a pitchfork you can be confident he's both inbred and would like to hurt you.

3 SCYTHE *DANTE'S INFERNO*



The scythe was invented for reaping crops, but then Death had the idea of using it to reap souls. Then in this game, Dante robs it off Death and uses it to splat the minions of Hell.

2 ELECTRIC RAKE *DEAD RISING 2*



On its own a leaf rake is really better for raking leaves than slaying zombies, but combine it with a car battery and suddenly you're getting one-hit kills all over the place.

1 HOE *HARVEST MOON*



Nothing to do with vice or rude terms for women, the hoe is used to prepare the soil for crops. Can be upgraded to a Super Hoe, which isn't funny.

<http://bit.ly/07zhoo>

Top 8 hammers in videogames

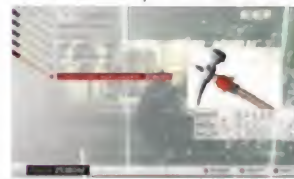
> POW HAMMER *SOUL CALIBUR*

What better way to arm your massive, hulking bloke than with a huge comedy hammer that squeaks when it hits opponents? Nothing. Astaroth mixes his armoury between huge axes, huge hammers and huge other things, but we know what we prefer.



> CONDOTTIERO WAR HAMMER *ASSASSIN'S CREED II*

Stealth is for pansies, and sneaking up on your opponent is the behaviour of an abject coward. No, the true measure of a man is if he'd be willing to kill persons of importance in Renaissance Italy using a massive hammer. That's what we call manly.



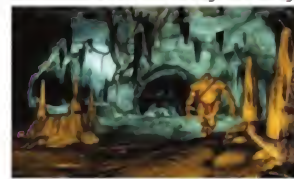
> WOODEN HAMMER *MINI NINJAS*

Wielded by the loveable Futo, the wooden hammer proves very useful in *Mini Ninjas*. Who else can leap up and bop a giant enemy on the head, stunning or killing them? Obviously Tora is the coolest but Futo makes up for it by being damn useful with his hammer.



> REPAIR HAMMER *THE ELDER SCROLLS IV: OBLIVION*

Just think how many times you used these during *Oblivion*.



Then realise of all the magic, bows, arrows, thievery, murder, swordplay and awesomeness, if it wasn't for repair hammers, a lot of us wouldn't have made much progress in the game.

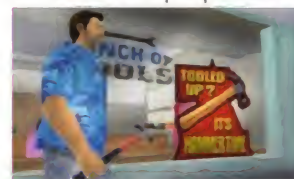
> MJOLNIR *MARVEL ULTIMATE ALLIANCE*

Thor's favoured bashing implement. Apparently, Mjolnir can control the elements, open interdimensional portals and could – at one point – be used for time travel. That's a smidge better than a 99p nail-bashing bargain from Wilko, we reckon.



> STANDARD HAMMER *GTA: VICE CITY*

Whereas most people seemed happy that *Vice City* added bikes, the more perceptive among us were actually happy about the true revelation – the addition of hammers. Sure, the \$20 price tag was steep, but just steal one off a builder and you're sorted.



> THUNDER HAMMER *WARHAMMER 40,000: SPACE MARINE*

We don't know if this weapon is in the game or not, but 1) it's a reasonable assumption to make, and 2) it's a really badass weapon, so we're going to include it regardless. Mjolnir is better on paper, but thunder hammers are more likely to exist. Maybe.



> OSTRICH HAMMER *RED FACTION: GUERRILLA*

Of course, the greatest videogame hammer of all time goes to Volition's Ostrich Hammer. Sure, the mega-powered standard hammers are all well and good, allowing you to knock down any and all buildings, but put in the effort online



and you are rewarded well. You are rewarded with the Ostrich Hammer. And life is good.

<http://bit.ly/dwnv9x>

PLAY₃ Investigates

The inside scoop on everything PlayStation

For beta or worse

LittleBigPlanet 2 beta report

Media Molecule's handpicked community members tell us what they thought of the beta



September was a time for good and bad news for fans of *LittleBigPlanet*. The bad news was that the game was not going to make its planned November release, getting pushed back into January 2011 so that Media Molecule would have more time to work on the final build. The good news, though, was that a select number of *LBP*'s most loyal and creative community members were invited to join a beta test for Sackboy's return featuring near final creative tools, new features and some finished MM levels to play, too. Of course, **Play** was among this select band of intrepid adventurers and we had the chance to grill some of the most creative beta testers for their take on the game.

All the creators we talked to praised the ease with which complicated ideas in the first game could now be executed in the sequel. "Sometimes it felt like you were battling with the system in *LBP 1* to get something done," *LBP* creator Ayneh, maker of *Grid Shooter*, said. "I remember making a tank in *LBP 1* and having to be really careful about the order in which I placed and glued the components together so I didn't accidentally glue the tracks, gun, antenna, running gear, drive wheels or any other moving objects

to the hull or turret of the vehicle. The creation process in *LBP 2* is a lot easier."

PPp_Killer, the maker of *Vietnam: FPS*, had his own example of how using *LBP 2* had made things simpler. "As an example of how much better the tools are, I actually made my Blackhawk helicopter flyable in my latest level – 'BCC01 Blackhawk Night Assault' – for the beta's flying contraption challenge," he told us. "You could give it a chip connected to the left stick through the Controlinator, to give it the ability to go up, down, left, right. In *LBP 1* I would have to place a piece of grabbable sponge that would set off ugly

rockets that wouldn't even allow your helicopter to fly properly anyway."

The introduction of logic systems and chips is cutting down on the memory space needed to create more complex gaming environments and that's meant bigger and bolder creations from the community. "I'm not too handy with all the new logic and electronics tools but people have already made calculators and simple computers using them, these were possible to make in *LBP 1* but at the expense of a lot of game resources and space, in *LBP 2* they're all collapsible to a single microchip," agreed Ayneh.

The maker of *Star Fighter*, Ladylyn1, agreed that the community is really showing what's possible even with a limited toolset. "The beta community is showing that the level of complexity has rocketed with these new tools," he said. "For example, I've seen a top-down racer ('Sack Turismo') with AI Sackbot opponents who vary their racing lines and driving style during the race! That's something racing games are still trying to perfect and yet there's already a playable example online on the beta."

And this was, of course, the whole point of a beta test for Media Molecule.





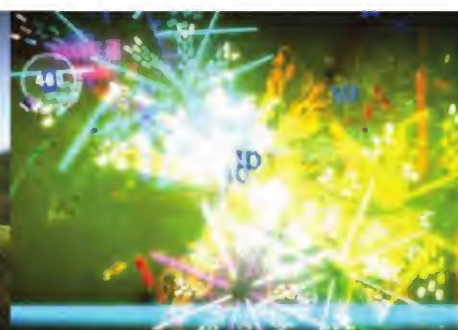
● We expect to see all kinds of crazy new levels in *LBP 2*.



● Complex levels should be far easier to create than they were in the original *LBP*.



● The old *LittleBigPlanet* charm will, of course, remain.



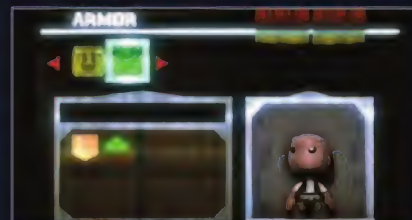
Play's beta picks

Some of our favourite levels from the *LBP 2* Beta



SACKRO MACHINES 2! (SLAPP-ME-DO)

How long have we been screaming and shouting for a *Micro Machines* game to be released on PSN? Too long we say, but thanks to *LBP 2* we won't need it. This racer was amazing fun in four player.



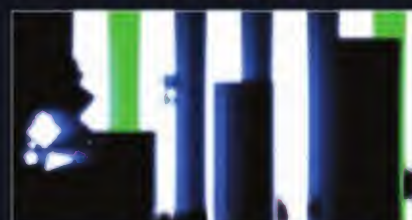
RPG-CONCEPT (DENJO92)

An amazing level that after a few updates included weapon upgrading, armour switching and a turn-based combat system. While its gameplay was limited its ingenuity was beyond comprehension.



VIETNAM: FPS (PPP_KILLER)

The game that really grabbed people's attention, *PPP_Killer* actually made an FPS in *LBP 1*, too, but admitted that the new tools made this version much more responsive and accurate.



STEREO/MONO (FYSHOKID)

A simple platformer, mixed with light-emitting materials and with batteries placed in the music sequencer so the level lights up in time with the soundtrack. Now you see the platform, now you don't.



LITTLE BIG RETRO ARCADE (DADRESTER)

A whole level filled with retro TV screens with a different retro game on each. Talk about showing off. Dadrester put together a great collection of little games with superb presentation.



● Sackboy's looking rather tired here – probably from all the testing.

As proud as it surely is about what it has managed to create, MM knows that the true value of *LittleBigPlanet 2* will only be revealed by its players. The ease with which so many of these games and levels have been created is testament to its success. "It's absolutely amazing that it's possible to create almost everything you can imagine with the number of tools available in the beta," Andrmt, maker of a *Pac-Man* homage, told us. "I think Media Molecule found a good balance between what you can do with the tools and what you can do with your imagination and this can already be seen in the levels that were made in the beta."

For us – the gamers, creators and players of *LBP 2* – the greatest achievement of the beta is the inspiration it has given these talented individuals moving forward. While at present there is no plan to have games created with the beta carry over to the main game, these select designers are already plotting their next masterpieces. Charleesatch, maker of the music demo *I Sack A Feeling*, will be looking to team up once the final game is released. "As Media Molecule

says this is turning into a platform for games," he began. "It would be nice if someone is making a level while you work on a personalised music score or some specific sound effects."

And then there are the creators who are hoping to break genre conventions and invent brand-new types of gaming experience like we've never seen before. "I think after a few months of the game being launched people will be exploring what they can do and will be creating things entirely divorced from the first

game, creating entirely new genres of gaming," Ayneh insisted, showing the level of optimism and passion shared by so many of the beta testers. "I already have an idea for a music strategy game where instead of units you control notes in a song."

As mad as it all may sound, we don't doubt that all these creators will pull off something special once *LittleBigPlanet 2* is released early next year. Whether you play, create or share yourself you're going to be getting a great deal from it.

We're sure these creators will pull off something special

A dramatic, low-key photograph of a soldier in tactical gear, holding two handguns. The soldier's face is partially obscured by shadows, and the background is a dark, hazy green. The overall tone is gritty and intense.

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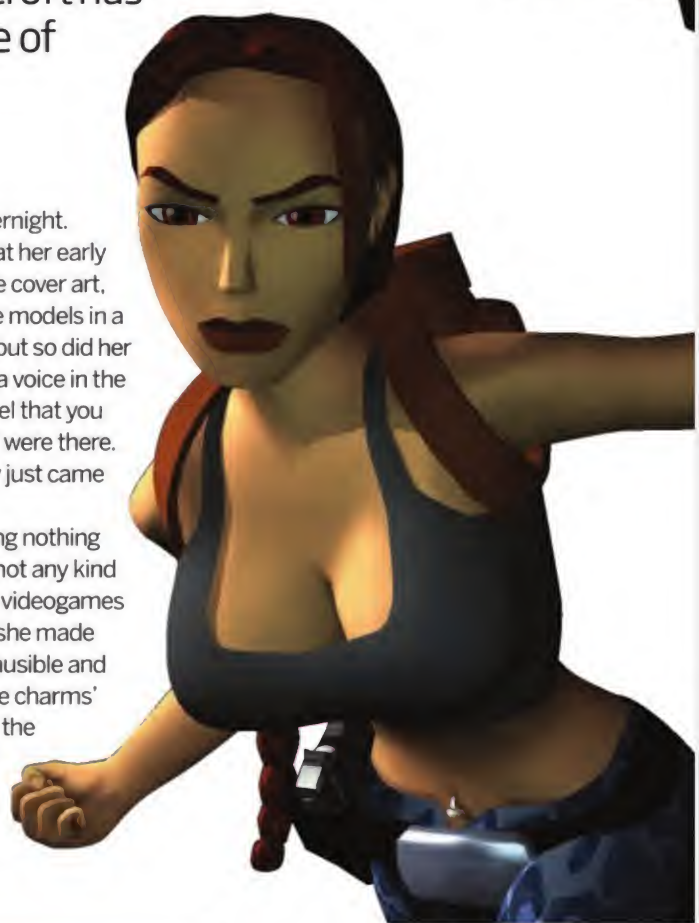
PLAY[•] 'S LARA CROFT

One of the PlayStation's most iconic characters, from a series that has risen and fallen and risen again on every format of the console, Lara Croft has returned again and our love of her has not diminished

Sex appeal

Lara Croft became a sex symbol almost overnight. That might be hard to believe looking back at her early graphical incarnations on PSone or even the cover art, but it's true. As one of the earliest 3D female models in a videogame she attracted a lot of attention, but so did her personality. Lara didn't really have much of a voice in the early days, remaining largely an empty vessel that you could live through, but her strength and will were there. They didn't need to be vocalised as they just came through the gameplay.

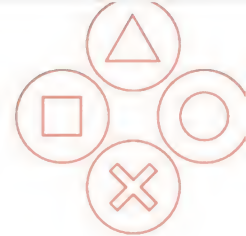
Much has been said about Lara being nothing more than a male fantasy figure and not any kind of liberating female role model in the videogames industry, but the fact remains that she made female action heroes in games plausible and profitable. She used her 'feminine charms' to make that possible. Without the appeal she wouldn't have been so impactful.



It's a man's world

By all accounts Ms Pac-Man was the first female videogame lead, but she was just Pac-Man with a bow on his head. Then there was Samus Aran, who players didn't even know was a woman until they finished the game. Of course Chun-Li followed and has been a mainstay of the *Street Fighter* series, a woman surrounded by men, but those games are an ensemble. There was only one game that wore the fact it had a female main character on its sleeve and gave her the firepower to do everything the men could do and more. *Tomb Raider* was revolutionary in this respect as well as delivering the kind of action gameplay we had only seen in movies before. She was Indiana Jones, James Bond and a *Bond Girl* all wrapped up into one. Sounds like the ultimate hero to us.





The face of things to come

Famously Lara was the cover girl of the June 1997 issue of lifestyle and pop culture magazine *The Face*. In the months directly before and after the magazine had featured The Chemical Brothers, Beck and Uma Thurman. That just goes to show what power Lara had even from an early stage. We can't recall another videogame character managing a similar feat on any mainstream publication before or since. Lara is an icon, as recognisable to gamers

and non-gamers alike as Mario or Sonic. We would put money on more people recognising her than knowing who Master Chief is. Her outfit was even copied for a Bond girl in *The World Is Not Enough*. After all the games, movies and comics it's hard to think of Lara Croft as 'just a games character'. She's bigger than all of that and better, too.



She's got the moves

As move sets go Lara pretty much has it all. She can shoot, fight, run, jump, swing, climb and all the things in-between. When we talk about action adventure, *Tomb Raider* has come to define and embody the entire genre. It was *Tomb Raider* by which we measured *Uncharted*, the new *Prince Of Persia* games and so many others besides. A huge part of what made *Tomb Raider* so important is Lara herself and the athleticism and versatility she brings to the series. As time has gone by she may have become a jack of all trades and master of none, but she has pointed the genre in the right direction, bringing classic cinema action-adventure stories and presentation into games.

Locations, locations, locations

What you certainly can't fault Lara on is her choice of holiday destinations and the uncanny knack she has for unearthing dastardly deeds when she gets there.

From Atlantis to Thailand Lara's adventures have taken us to some amazing places. The greatest example of this came with her last console outing, *Tomb Raider: Underworld* with its superb jungles and temples.

Like any great action movie, Lara's games have taken us to some of the most exotic locations in gaming history and in recent years have done them great justice in the accuracy of their re-creation. We always look forward to seeing where Lara will go next.



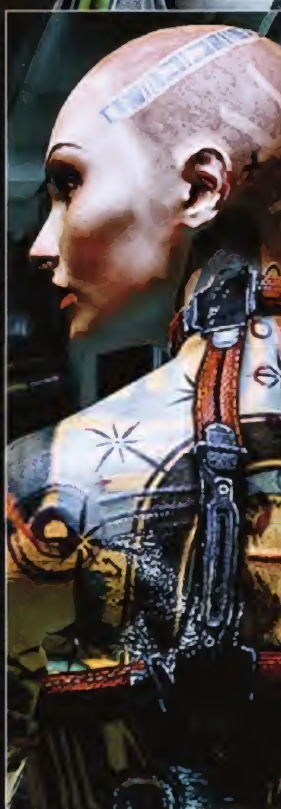
WHATEVER YOUR FEELINGS about the quality of her most recent games and whether or not you see her as a strong female role model or a pair of breasts on legs, we don't much care. For us Lara Croft is one of gaming's legendary creations. She turned what it meant to be a gaming hero on its head and in so doing she has helped to pave the way for plenty of great heroines to follow.

10 THINGS TO DO IN MASS EFFECT BEFORE YOU DIE

AN ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO
GETTING THE MOST OUT OF
BIOWARE'S SPACE EPIC

■ FALL IN LOVE/LUST

It's practically a unique selling point of this series now that as Shepard you have a number of romantic possibilities open to you if you choose to pursue them. Here are your choices in *Mass Effect 2*.

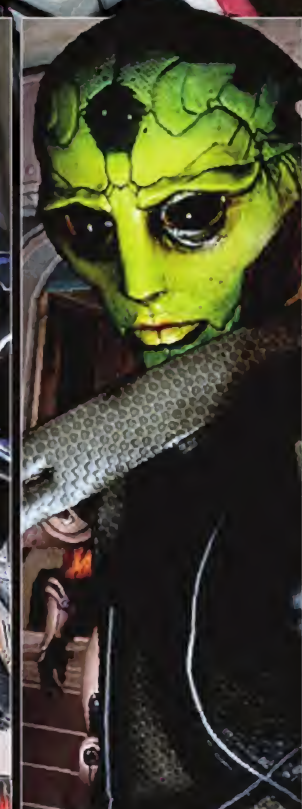


■ PLAYING AS MALE SHEPARD

Miranda Lawson A Cerberus agent whose intentions and motivations are not entirely known, a relationship with Miranda could be troublesome. Can she be trusted?

Tali'Zorah vas Neema As a member of Shepard's original team from *Mass Effect*, Tali'Zorah has had a long friendship with your character. However, intimacy could actually risk her life.

Jack 'Subject Zero' has been through a lot and has a thick skin and plenty of attitude to prove it. Can you crack through her distrust of everyone and set her free of her past?



■ PLAYING AS FEMALE SHEPARD

Jacob Taylor The hero of BioWare's *Mass Effect* iPhone game, Jacob is ex-military and a good soul. However, he does work for Cerberus, which could be an issue.

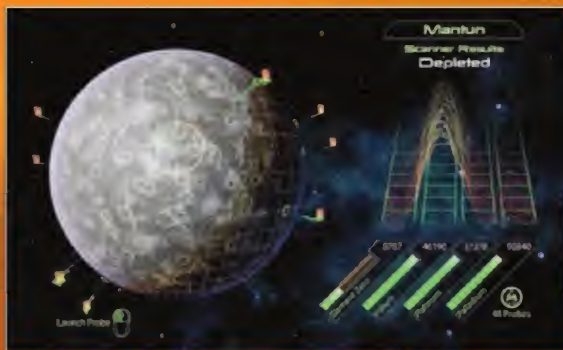
Garrus Vakarian Another loyal member of Team Shepard from *Mass Effect*, the inter-species issues of a relationship led to some very funny (and awkward) dialogue.

Thane Krios If you're the weepy emo type then this relationship may well be for you. The terminally ill Thane joins your mission, as he knows he will die. Can you give him a reason to live?



MEET GARY SHEPARD

Despite virtually every promotional image and piece of artwork showing the same hero, Commander Shepard is yours to control and design as you see fit. He doesn't have to be a generic, shaven-headed space marine. He doesn't even have to be a man. Give your *Mass Effect* playthrough the personal touch and change your Shepard into something different.



MINE YOUR BUSINESS

Mining for resources has been a divisive issue for some *Mass Effect 2* players since it wasn't an issue in the first game, but it is essential if you want to upgrade equipment and survive the final mission with a crew. Scanning planets for ores and the elusive Element Zero may seem like a chore, but we find it a great way to wind down after a draining battle. Be sure to mine Uranus by the way.



PUBLIC DISTURBANCE

If you really want to cause a scene on the Citadel we recommend following the Renegade conversation options when in discussion with shop owners about a discount. Do this and Shepard will accuse the shop owner of being prejudiced against poor people as he/she storms out of the store. It's pretty funny and you should still get that discount.



DL THE DLC

There was a time on the Xbox 360 when you would have to wait quite a while after the game was released before you could play any extra adventures. Fortunately, for those of us living in PlayStation 3-land, we will have most – if not all – of the extra content available from day one. What this means is we can get a few extra guns and a few other bits and pieces, but you really should want to explore the *Lair Of The Shadow Broker*. It's excellent.



DICE WITH DEATH

Another romantic side story you have the option of pursuing is also one that will result in your immediate death. Morinth is the daughter of Justicar Samara and an Ardat-Yakshi meaning that in mating with another being she drains them of life and kills them. Samara's loyalty mission involves hunting Morinth and killing her, but choose to kill Samara instead and a romantic relationship can be pursued. Trouble is consummating that relationship will kill Shepard.



BE THE BAD COP

During Thane's loyalty mission, Sins Of The Father, you will need to interrogate a local gang boss by the name of Elias Kelham and find out who he hired Thane's son Kolyat to kill. Prior to this scene Thane will ask if you want to be the good cop or the bad cop during the interrogation. We would recommend being the latter just for a good excuse to slap some crook around for a few minutes and terrify him. Good for those Renegade points, too, of course.



SUCH A SONG AND DANCE

Talking to your crew is highly recommended, if only to bring together more information about the world around you. It can also take conversations in interested directions further down the line. For instance, paying plenty of attention to Mordin Solus, your science expert, will sing a Gilbert and Sullivan song for you. Likewise Legion, the unlikely Geth member of your team, can be seen doing 'the robot' dance in his quarters if you visit him regularly.



PUNCH THE SPACE MONKEY

There are a couple of occasions within *Mass Effect* where you'll get the opportunity to punch someone rather annoying and arguably quite deserving in the face. In *Mass Effect 2* you'll be taking some of that pent-up frustration and aggression out on the Pyjacks of the Krogan homeworld Tuchanka. If punching isn't enough for you then there's always blowing them up as an assignment for a local shopkeeper.



JUST ONE MORE GO

To get the most out of *Mass Effect 2* you really need to play it through more than once. Try having a go as a pure Paragon or Renegade character. Switch up to different class types to get a feel for the Biotic and Tech powers available. Make some different decisions regarding your love interests or even the fate of entire cities. *Mass Effect 2* really does leave a lot of things in your hands and some of them can be life or death decisions. You'll need more than one playthrough to experience them.

WHEN DEVELOPERS ATTACK!

WARNING! The following feature contains graphic reports of game developers attacking humans (as well as companies, consoles and games). Reader discretion is advised

● The language Cliffy B used in his discussion of the *Transformers* movie was as abrasive as that chainsaw.



● The Wii has taken a lot of stick from devs, but no one has yet referred to it as 'piiss', which is surely a missed opportunity.

As games journalists, we look forward to meeting and interviewing the people that actually make games because they're always so knowledgeable and informative. Nothing pleases us more than coming away from a chat with a developer carrying a Dictaphone bulging with 20 solid minutes of insight into the craft of making games.

We are such liars.

The truth is that as games journalists, the one thing we want to hear more than anything in an interview is a game developer going on the offensive. It's a rare occurrence as generally they're decent, polite people who are respectful (not to mention cautious) of other individuals and institutions in the games industry. But every now and again you get one who's either naive or who just doesn't care any more. You feel kinda guilty gleefully recording statements you know they're probably going to regret, but there's no denying it's a guilty pleasure for writer and reader alike.

And in this age of blogging and Twitter and internet forums, you don't even need to interview developers in order to get inflammatory comments from them. In

fact, they're even less on their guard when it's late at night and they're at home with their laptop feeling a bit tired and tetchy.

Former Criterion and Codemasters mouthpiece Stuart Black recently got a taste of his own medicine when he announced he would be leaving the *Bodycount* team before the project is even finished. Upon hearing the news, Gearbox Software's Mikey Neumann got itchy Twitter fingers,

"I don't know why Stuart Black's headlines for today don't read 'Guy who s**ts on everyone else's games can't finish his own.'"

Well, to be fair, Black didn't s**t on everyone else's games. He s**t on every cover shooter,

"There's a lot of cover-based shooters out at the moment... F**king boring. I can't be bothered hanging around like that."

And he s**t on *Killzone 2*,

"They didn't do a good job with that right stick in Killzone 2. That's one where I'll say, 'That was a bit poo, really.'"

Another loose mouth hitting the gaming headlines recently was that of Mark Rein. The Epic Games vice president has a history of speaking his mind, having prophesised about the Wii back in 2005,

"Don't kid yourself – you're going to see more gimmicky, crappy, cheap, I-wish-I-hadn't-bought-it games based around that controller than you can ever possibly imagine."

Sentiments echoed forcefully, as it happens, by another master of speaking before thinking, former Maxis designer/engineer Chris Hecker. Speaking at the Game Developers Conference 2007, Hecker announced,



ACTIVISION

● Epic's Mark Rein was unimpressed with EA and Activision's budgeting forecasts for this generation.

WHEN DEVELOPERS ATTACK!



F.E.A.

FREQUENTLY GIVEN ANSWERS

What developers say when they remember to toe the line

"We've listened to all the feedback from our community."

"We're all fans of [Game X] here at [Studio Y]. We have so much respect for those guys."

"It's a cinematic experience just like you'd expect from a blockbuster Hollywood movie."

"We're so lucky to have [token 'expert' outsider who knows nothing about videogames] on board this project."

"We're really not trying to compete with [Game X]."

"Today we're just talking about [this] and [that]. No announcements about [the other] have been made yet."

"We actually had the idea for this five years ago, long before [Game X] [which features the same idea] even existed."

"We put more pressure on ourselves than anyone else puts on us."

"It's for the fans, but will also open up the franchise to a completely new audience."

"The 360 and PS3 versions are being developed side by side to ensure there will be no performance differences at all."

"The Wii is a piece of st!"**

Before going on to urge Nintendo to,

"Make a console that doesn't suck ass."

Rein qualified his comments and Hecker went back on his the following day, admitting he just got a bit carried away in the moment, but the original statements are still the most memorable, you have to agree.

Anyway, back to Mark Rein who – again, back when this console generation was just a twinkle in various Microsoft/Sony/Nintendo execs' eyes – slammed big-name publishers for whining about the heightened production costs they claimed to be facing.

"I've heard EA and Activision make absolutely ridiculous statements about, 'Oh, it's going to take 30 million dollars to make a game and we need 300 people' – that's just a bunch of bullst. They're just covering up for their own management and incompetence. Or mismanagement I should say."**

Oh yes, Rein has form. So what's he been up to this time? Well, he butted in on someone else's panel at this year's Develop conference, totally unable to contain his disagreement with something that had been said.

He was only trying to help, but the guy he interrupted, Positech's Cliff Harris (himself known for his rather outspoken views) was not appreciative. Writing on his blog, Harris said,

"...Triple-A studio bosses trying to lecture me on how to communicate better with gamers? Fk off."**

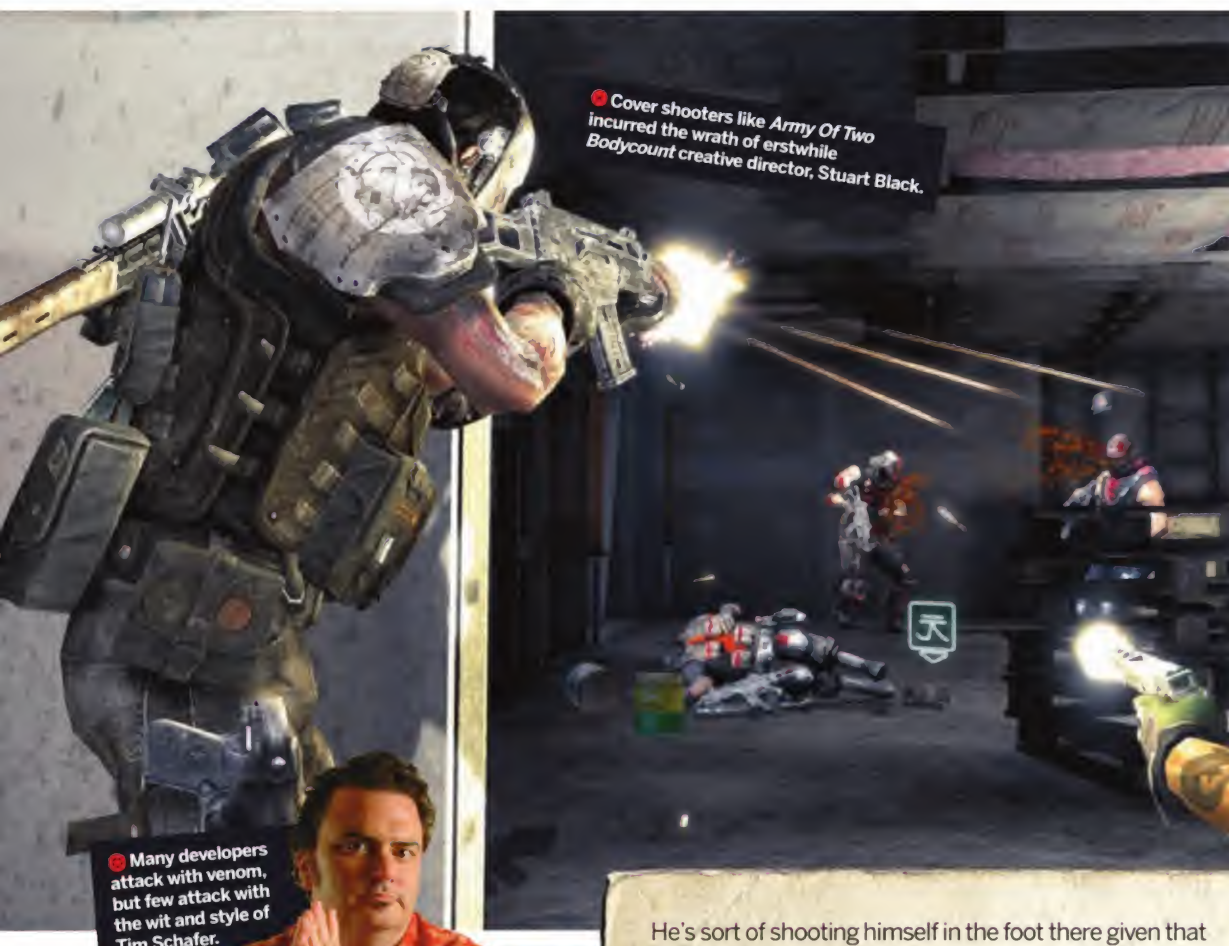
Telling a major player like Mark Rein to f**k off – this Harris fella isn't messing around. And far from taking offence and issuing an 'I could crush you, feebling!' type response, Mark Rein sucked it up and issued a full and sincere apology. Good for him.

Moving on, one man who's never been known to apologise for anything is *Ninja Gaiden* and *Dead Or Alive* creator Tomonobu Itagaki. In Japan, many game developers attain a kind of rock star status and are therefore used to saying whatever the hell they want about whatever the hell they want whenever the hell they want. None more so than Itagaki, who likes to think mouthy Japanese developers come in two flavours,

"There are two types of people out there who like to make controversial, splashy comments. There are those who are truly outspoken, and there are those who are just trying to cover up for their weaknesses. We have a saying here in Japan – the weaker dog barks more."

● Despite what Stuart Black says, *Killzone 2* is not "a bit poo". It's not poo at all.





● Cover shooters like *Army Of Two* incurred the wrath of erstwhile *Bodycount* creative director, Stuart Black.

● Many developers attack with venom, but few attack with the wit and style of Tim Schafer.



● Mark Rein looks like he wouldn't say 'Boo!' to a goose, but he almost certainly would.



POKE IT WITH A STICK

Five ways to provoke a developer into attacking

- 1 Repeatedly insist their game would be better if they made it more like *Call Of Duty*.
- 2 Greet each interview answer they provide with a simple "No", before moving onto your next question.
- 3 Ask them which current-generation console they honestly like best over and over again.
- 4 No matter what kind of game they're making, demand to know why there is only one sniper rifle (even if there are several).
- 5 Describe the first bit of the demo they just showed you then ask, "How is this possible?" Then describe the next bit of the demo and ask, "How is *this* possible?" And so on.

He's sort of shooting himself in the foot there given that he barks more abuse at rival games than any games developer on Earth.

"If I made a similar game as a game I made in the company I quit, people would say, 'What an idiot, can't he make anything else?' Well, that is more or less the opinion I have for, uh, that Bayo-something game."

Bayonetta – which is markedly better than *Ninja Gaiden II*, to be perfectly frank. Itagaki also famously believes that "*Tekken* sucks", having recently pointed out that the only reason *Tekken 6* didn't make it into his Worst Games Ever list was that it was already full with *Tekken*, *Tekken 2*, *Tekken 3*, *Tekken 4* and *Tekken 5*.

"I don't think it even needs saying, but people should stay away from Tekken. Nothing left to say. I just don't want them to disappoint me any more. It's so annoying. Please don't annoy me any more."

But if you can't find a seasoned big mouth like Itagaki to provoke into an attack, sometimes a total newcomer can be just as good. Richard Morgan, a successful sci-fi author but complete newcomer to videogame scriptwriting, now has a lot to prove when his first game, *Crysis 2*, is released, after he called the storytelling in *Halo* "bulls**t", the characterisation in *Batman: Arkham Asylum* "f**king bulls**t" and *Modern Warfare 2* "an immense disappointment". You've got to respect his openness and honesty, but it's also difficult not to hope the story in *Crysis 2* sucks just to make his comments even funnier (it's actually looking really good so far, mind you).

Game developers don't just attack other game companies and their products either.

Sometimes they get nasty – and we mean really nasty – on people working in other forms of media. Take Epic Games' Cliff Bleszinski, who's normally a mild-mannered chap, quite unlike his boss Mr Rein. Thing is, the guy cares deeply about the toys, comics and cartoons of his youth. He cares so much that much of his open letter to *Transformers* director Michael Bay has had to be heavily edited here.

"Please, while you're [CENSORED], please use a little bit of [CENSORED]. I'm not even asking for that silky [CENSORED] sprayable window cleaner [CENSORED]. I'm asking for maybe take a second away from [CENSORED] to maybe hock up a tiny little glob of phlegm and adhere it to the tip of your [CENSORED]."

It was very difficult to make that quote suitable for **Play** without compromising its considerable attack value. You still get some idea of the sentiment expressed, though, right?

Another game developer that has a way with words is Double Fine boss Tim Schafer. Until recently, he wasn't prone to four-letter outbursts, preferring instead to rely on pure wit, like when he responded to Activision's threat of legal action over rights to *Brütal Legend* with,

"Hey, if Activision liked it, then they should have put a ring on it. Oh great, now Beyoncé is going to sue me, too."

That, dear readers, is trash-talking with style. However, Schafer was recently cajoled into expressing his real feelings on Activision CEO Bobby Kotick and can now count himself a fully paid up member of the When Developers Attack! elite.

"His obligation is to his shareholders. Well, he doesn't have to be as much of a dk about it, does he? I think there is a way he can do it without being a total p***k."**

The following day, Schafer admitted,

"I need to keep my mouth shut."

Don't be so hard on yourself, Tim. It's not like you're... David Jaffe. Oh yes, the best has been saved 'til last. The undisputed king of not being able to just bite his lip and let it go, especially on the internet, is *Twisted Metal* and *God Of War* creator David Jaffe. The man likes to say 'f**k' (or at least to type it), of that there can be no doubt. Here's a few choice Jaffe quotes. It all starts off innocuously enough,

"I DO LIKE HALO!"

But there'll be a sting in this tail,

"I just don't get the religious fervour and feel much of the fervour has been purchased by Microsoft."

That's right, if you love *Halo*, Microsoft *bought* you. No swearing yet, though. Jaffe likes to save the swearing for when he's asked harmless questions about whether there's a PS3 version of *Twisted Metal* in the works,

"We haven't announced anything yet... now fk off."**

That was in 2008, but Jaffe told someone to f**k off in 2009, too. This time it was a fan following him on Twitter, who disagreed with (or perhaps misconstrued) some points he made about used-game sales,

"No, I mean YOU should fk off – not the concept. You simply seem like an a*****e."**

The following day, perhaps realising he might not be his own best PR agent, Jaffe Tweeted again,

"Let's see if I can JUST SHUT THE FK UP for the next 6 months."**

And he did, too, for six months and then some. But then, in May of this year Jaffe re-emerged, pausing to reflect on the quiet, meditative period behind him,

"As of late I've tried to be nicer, kinder, more inclusive. Fk that. Doesn't work."**



He's actually talking about his own staff there (poor souls), but it's probably safe to assume the same applies to Twitter followers and so on, too. It certainly applies to game developers attempting to create artistic, meaningful, personal products. As Jaffe himself confesses, he is...

"SO FKING SICK of artsy fartsy in this industry. Get f**king over yourselves, bitches."**

And as games journalists we are so fff... flipping sick of game developers who stick rigidly to the official line, only ever publicly stating things that could've been read off of a press release. The handful of loudmouths quoted here might not always make sense, they might not always be fair, and they might not always tell you what you really want to hear, but at least they're not hiding behind vacuous non-statements and bogus, bullet-point claims about run-of-the-mill projects. So, yes, developers who attack – you've got to love 'em.

Now fk off!**



☹️ "Hello, I'm Richard Morgan and I'm much better dressed than any other game developer" is something Richard Morgan has, to our knowledge, never said.

☹️ Sometimes we wonder if the characters David Jaffe creates aren't somehow indicative of his personality below the surface.

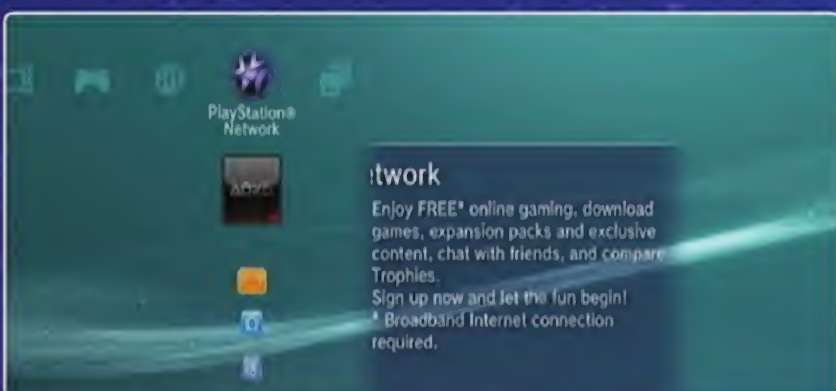
RISING FUN

Play Japan-only games on your PS3 or PSP right now! We teach you how to reap the benefits of a Japanese PSN account

IMPORTING GAMES IS a pain. You have to worry about region locks (depending on your console), shipping, paying tons of money, but worst of all, there's no instant gratification. At least, that's how importing games used to be. Sony has made it quite a bit easier for PlayStation owners to get their hands on Japanese games. How exactly? It's possible for gamers around the world to register a Japanese PlayStation Store account, buy and play Japanese games. Not only will we teach you how, we're going to give you a quick rundown of the best Japan-only games for the PSP and PS3.

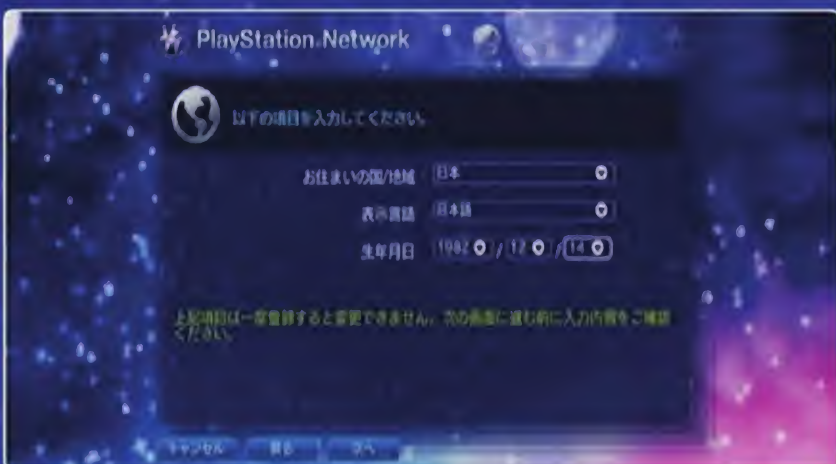


FIRST STEPS:



- Boot up your PlayStation and go to the XrossMediaBar. Head over to the far left and create a new user account and log into it.
- Next, go to the far left and choose Sign Up for PlayStation Network from the PlayStation Network tab.
- Choose Create New Account.
- From here on out you will create a PSN account like any other. However, you'll have to do it in Japanese. Don't worry, we've provided a handy page-by-page glossary, with tips for problem areas. Use our guide then check out the next page for the games.

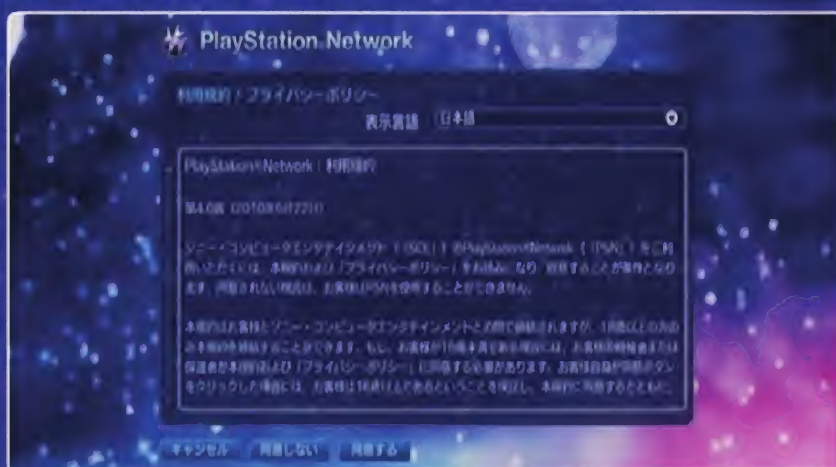
PAGE 1



In the top box, select Japan as your country of residence. Once you do everything on screen will change to Japanese. Don't worry, we'll teach you everything you need to know. The steps are exactly the same as they would be in English. Just use our glossary and you'll make it through fine.

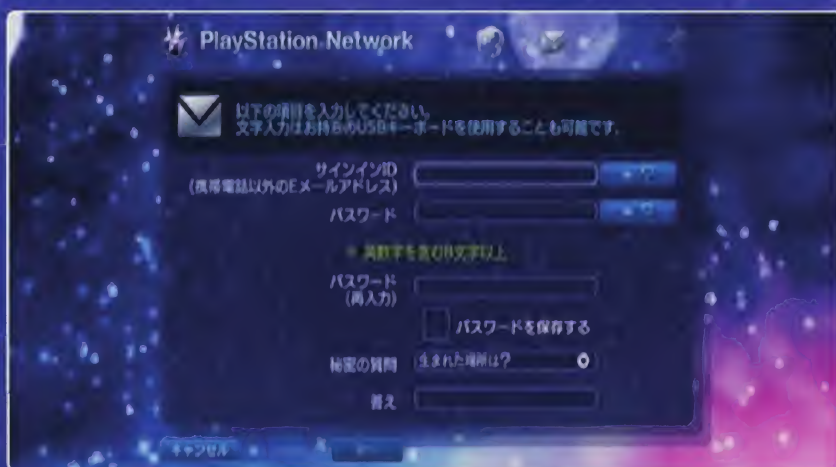
- 生年月日 – This is your date of birth. Enter it in year/month/day format
 キャンセル – Cancel
 戻る – Return to the previous page
 次へ – Next

PAGE 2: TERMS OF SERVICE



- 同意しない – Don't agree 同意する – Agree

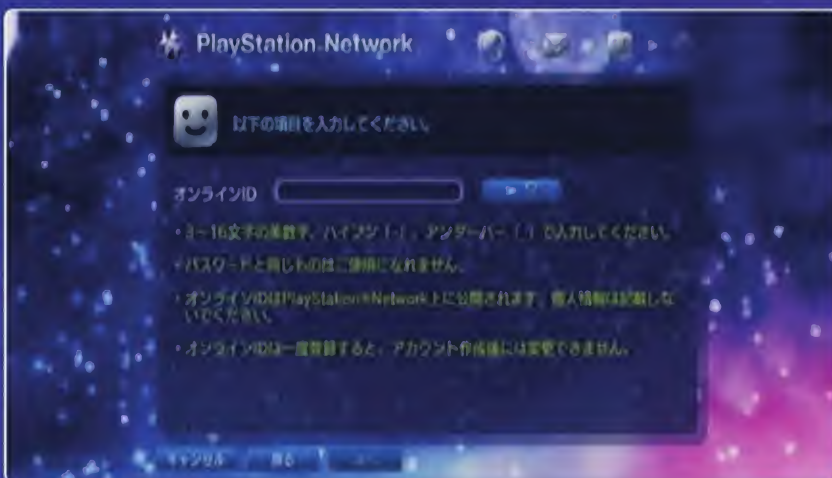
PAGE 3



- サインインID – Sign-in ID (Use any mail address that's not already tied to a PSN account. When you enter the address you'll get a message. Just skip past it)
 パスワード – Password
 パスワード(再入力) – Password confirmation
 パスワードを保存する – Save password
 秘密質問 – This is your secret question. Since you probably can't read it, it doesn't matter which one you select
 答え – Answer to secret question. Hit select multiple times to switch to English text input

If you get an error message at the end, your passwords probably don't match twice, or your email address is probably already in use.

PAGE 4



オンラインID – Sign-in ID

It must be 3-16 characters with no hyphens. It can't be the same as your password.

You'll get a short message when you enter the ID. It will go away in a few seconds. If your ID is valid you can go on to the next page.

PAGE 5



姓 – Last Name 性別 – Sex 男性 – Male
 名 – First Name 女性 – Female

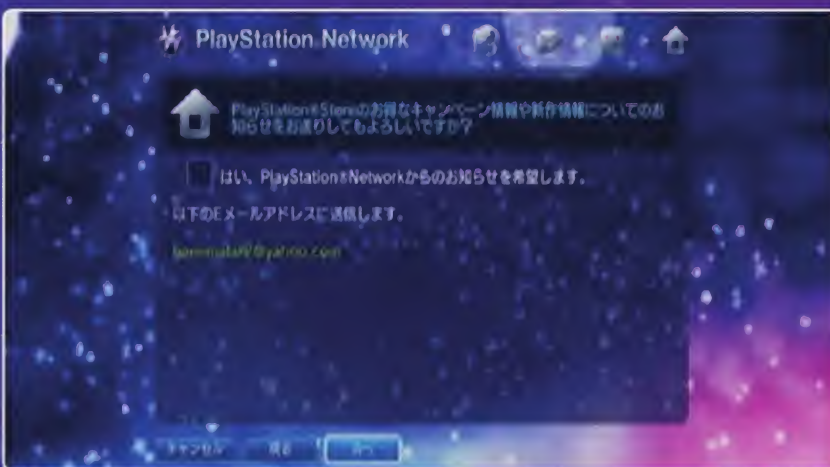
PAGE 6



On this page you'll need to enter a Japanese address. We can't give you a Japanese address to use, but the real important thing is to get a matching prefecture and postal code. With a little bit of Google-fu, you should be gold.

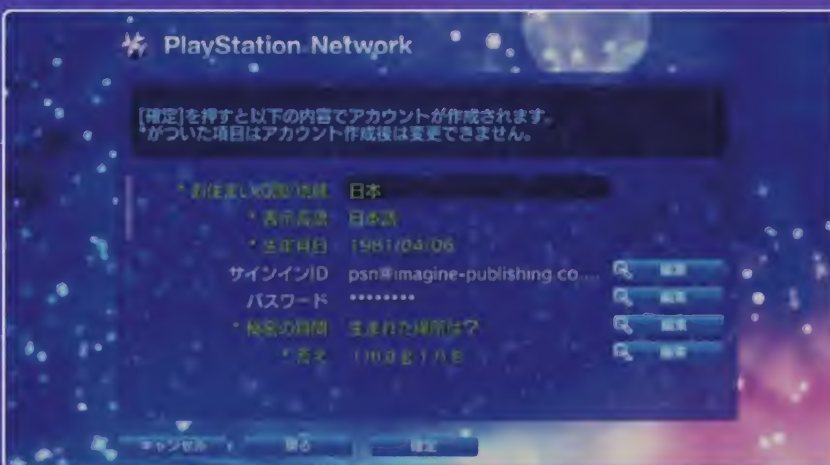
郵便番号 – Postal Code 住所と番地 1 – Street address 1
 都道府県 – Prefecture 住所と番地 2 – Street address 2
 市区町村 – City, ward, town or village ビル、マンション名 – Building name

PAGE 7



This page is asking if you want to get Sony's PSN info sent to you every week in Japanese. Just move on to the next page.

PAGE 8: THE FINAL PAGE

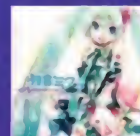
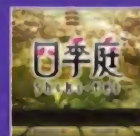


キャンセル – Cancel 戻る – Return 確定 – Confirm

Hit confirm and you're done. Log into the PlayStation Store and feel free to look around. In order to buy anything you'll need either a Japanese credit card or a Japanese point card for the PSN. We can't help you with either, but a quick Google search will turn up lots of places to get Japanese PSN cards.

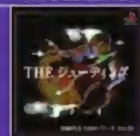
GAMES

SHIKI-TEI: Who needs blood and guts when you can garden? *Shiki-Tei* is a beautiful Japan-only PSN game that lets you grow, care for and maintain your own Japanese garden. It plays much like any other management sim (think *SimCity*), but it has a pleasant, Japanese charm that sets it apart.



PROJECT DIVA (PSP): *Project Diva* is the hottest thing in the Japanese gaming scene right now. Starring the virtual idol Hatsune Miku, it's an impressive-looking rhythm-action game. You may not have heard of Hatsune, but you've probably heard her voice. She amps up the sheer 'Japaneseness' of the game to such levels that it's a must-have for Japanophiles.

SIMPLE 2000 GAMES: The Simple 2000 series is a budget line of videogames in Japan. At 300 Yen (about £2.24), they are some of the cheapest PSone games on the PS Store. Most suck, but every now and then a gem comes along such as PS2 cult hit *Global Defence Force*. We can't recommend a specific game, but at £2 each, a little experimenting can't hurt.



ANGEL LOVE ONLINE: You often hear Western game journalists pondering the future of MMO games on consoles. Outside of *Final Fantasy XI*, there hasn't really been another MMO, let alone a successful one for gamers to point to and examine. However, the Japanese PSN hosts *Angel Love Online*, a free-to-play online RPG.

SQUARE ENIX RPGS: Yeah, yeah, UK gamers always get Square Enix RPGs months after Japanese gamers. They got the first versions of *FFVII*, *VIII* and *IX*, and now they are the first PS3 gamers to try out *Threads Of Fate*. Some games don't even make it outside of Japan at all. The Japanese PSN has also had *Xenogears* for years but we don't think it will ever come out in Europe.



Speculative Fiction

We can't see the future, but we can make educated guesses. So what does the future of Sony and the PlayStation have in store for us gamers?

THE GAMES

THE ONES WE KNOW **ASIDE FROM THOSE** covered in our exhaustive preview coverage of this and the last few issues of **Play**, there are a few games hiding in the shadows, waiting to unleash themselves on the world. We know they exist, we just don't know very much about them. Nevertheless, they represent the known future of the PlayStation, so here are just a few of the highlights...



RESIDENT EVIL 6

We hoped to see something of *Resi 6* at TGS, but nothing came of it. We (think we) know it exists, and all signs point to it being a 'complete reboot' of the franchise – think how *Resi 4* was compared to the early games in the series. We can't wait.



CALL OF DUTY: SLEDGEHAMMER

This isn't the title of the new game, just the studio developing it. Still, the *COD* series has been a defining part of this generation, and its change of hands from the two main devs (Treyarch/Infinity Ward) could see the games go in a new direction.



ELITE IV

Is this a sequel to the legendary *Elite* vapourware? Apparently not, as a chance meeting with a source familiar with Frontier Developments told us. Not only does the game exist, it's set to do some "mindblowing" things for gaming. This, remember, is coming straight from the horse's mouth.



HALF LIFE 2: EPISODE 3

We're slowly coming to accept that we're not going to see a *Half Life 2*-beater in the near future. So our minds are drawn back to *Episode 3* and all that could entail – sign language, a more emotional story, the future of gaming redefined *again*? Possibly.



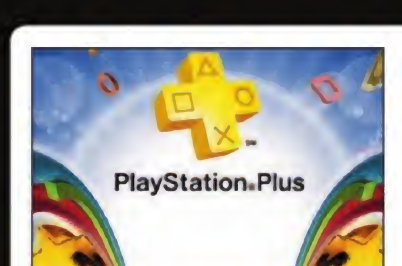
DUST 514

The details aren't forthcoming, but the ambition is plain for all to see – an FPS tying in with an existing PC MMO to create a giant meta-game. This will go one of two ways: abject failure, or the future of gaming as we know it.



AGENT

It's still a PS3 exclusive, it's still from Rockstar and it's still supposed to be coming out at some point. But we still don't know anything about it. Regardless, with Rockstar's past record this could turn out to be the future of PS3 gaming.



OFF-OFFLINE

Or 'online' if you're being picky

THE FUTURE OF PSN, the PlayStation Store and online gaming in general is an interesting one. The success or failure of upcoming MMOs *The Agency*, *DC Universe Online* and *Final Fantasy XIV* will dictate how many more games of the genre we see on the console. How PlayStation Plus fares may dictate how many features are added for subscribers to the service (cross-game chat?). Changing attitudes to digital delivery will likely see more full retail release games available via downloads – something we've only seen the bare minimum of so far. It's another interesting element of PlayStation's future.



THE GAMES The ones we don't know

IT'S ALL WELL and good talking about those we do know about, but what about those we don't? Well that's where we have to put on our speculating caps, sit in our pondering hammocks and make educated guesses as to what will rear its head for PS3 and PSP in future months and years. Obviously none of these are confirmed – it's just some hot Nostradamus action.



UNCHARTED 3

We made our suggestions for Nathan Drake's next adventures in our review of *Uncharted 2*, and we hope Naughty Dog was paying attention. Things are quiet, but it would surprise us a hell of a lot more if *Uncharted 3* wasn't announced than if it was.



GRAND THEFT AUTO V

It's working on other things, like the aforementioned *Agent*, but Rockstar isn't going to be leaving its flagship series alone for a long time. Where would *GTA V* end up? Back to *Vice City* seems to be what a lot of people are wishing for, so we'll go with that.



GOD OF WAR IV

God Of War III was meant to be Kratos's last outing until we learned about the next PSP game coming out. Then we thought back to the ending and we came to the shocking conclusion that *God Of War IV* will probably come out at some point.



NEW QUANTIC DREAM PROJECTS

Quantic Dream's David Cage has said *Heavy Rain* won't receive a sequel, but he has said the company would bring even more of its individual games to PS3. We don't have the confidence to guess what it might be, judging by the dev's previous output.

THE ALSO-RANS

AND THIS IS all without even going into the new *Tomb Raider* game, *The Darkness 2*, the *Syndicate* remake or even the chance of a new *Everybody's Golf* game.



THE ELDER SCROLLS VI

We're still waiting for Bethesda to put us out of our misery – it's been a long wait since the fantastic *Oblivion* came out, after all. While a lot of us want more of the same exploring the fantasy realms, some rumours point to an online title.



ASSASSIN'S CREED III

Brotherhood is a stopgap – a huge, fleshed-out stopgap – between *Assassin's Creed II* and *III*. We've been told *ACIII* is unlikely to be set during World War II, so we'll put a quid on it being during the French Revolution. Just... because.



BORDERLANDS 2

The original *Borderlands* was apparently "sent out to die" at the end of last year. Over 2 million sales later, we feel the need to disagree with Michael Pachter's 'expert' view. A sequel now seems inevitable – but will it be more of the same, or even an MMO?



METAL GEAR SOLID 5

See, *Metal Gear Solid 4* was meant to be the last MGS game. Then *Peace Walker* came out – which was at one point *Metal Gear Solid 5*. Meaning there is still an empty place in Hideo Kojima's head where a true *MGS 5* should be. That place will be filled.

THE TECHNOLOGY The tech to come?

THE FUTURE OF PS3 isn't just about the games. What could the tech side of things have for us in the future? What as-yet unthought of mega-technologies will we be employing via PS3 (and beyond) on our hover-TVs, in our future living rooms? Let's speculate some more:

PLAYSTATION 4

The PS3 is just hitting its stride, Sony has just got its swagger back – why would we even think of mentioning a PS4? Why, because we're talking future here. Controllerless? 3D everything? Stronger than an ox? Finally bringing *The Matrix* to the real world? We're just guessing here.

'SPLIT-SCREEN' ON 3DTVS

3D works by showing two separate images, flickering between the two and blah de blah trickery so you perceive depth. But these two images could be completely different, opening up the potential for two players on one TV, each with their own complete screen to play on. Genius.



PS4 and PSP 2 concepts by Tai Chiem. Visit <http://bit.ly/tk8wx> for more details



PSP 2

Things remained quiet during both gamescom and the Tokyo Game Show, and though we've hoped to hear something about PSP 2 by now, we haven't. The rumours still persist, with some developers claiming to have demo kits. If they are to be believed we should be hearing something quite soon.

CLOUD NETWORKING

Imagine not actually needing to have a physical copy of your game, or store your saves locally on your hard drive. Imagine all of this is on a network of computers far away, meaning you can access your library of games and saves wherever you have an internet connection. All you'd need is a console.





Enjoy Your Stay
Out Now



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Fallout
NEW VEGAS

RE:PLAY



Let them eat cake. No wait! Not them... us! Let us eat cake! We want cake!
We love cake. Mmm... cakey, cakey cake



This month's letters
answered by:
**Gavin Mackenzie,
Doctor Hu**

I'd just like to point out that if you guys want your letters printed in **Play**, then sending in your own pictures with them is a great way to increase your chances.

It's really tricky finding interesting and appropriate images to accompany your kind words sometimes, so a photo of a cake or a scar, or some drawings you did are a big help. But an actual cake would be better than a photo of one. Take the hint damnit, we want cake.

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Big Black Shiny Cake

Will I ever grow out of games? To be honest, I don't think I ever will! Games these days have just been seen as kids' toys but people forget that the average gamer is between 25-40 years old. People forget that games themselves are true technical achievements and take years of hard work, imagination and dedication to create (having just discovered this myself upon only making basic games at uni). Even at the tender age of 20 I can see myself having long gaming sessions with my kids and grandkids

to the point where they give up trying to beat the old man! I've also attached a picture of my 19th birthday cake to show my enthusiasm! I didn't even want to cut it! It's a true masterpiece!
Nicholas Savva, London

The two things the Play team love most are cake and PS3, so we couldn't not award you this month's Star Letter. Really, though, the free game should go to whoever baked this beautiful thing. Just make sure they don't try to play it in the cake.



Their teeth must've been a right state after eating that.

Back Issues

In October 2008, I had surgery to remove a brain tumour, but me being the special person I am, I didn't have the tumour in my brain, I had to have it inside my spinal column. I had a seven-hour surgery to remove part of it, they managed to get out 40 per cent, but when I woke up I had no feeling down the right side of my body from my chest to my toes. It makes it hard to walk, and I've been pretty much housebound since. I get out every now and then, but the pain I get in my side and the effort it takes to walk makes it hard to get out much.

During the time I've been in the house I've become a huge fan of Trophies. I'm currently on 13 Platins, and I'm close to another four. Also I love the PSN Store. I'm a bit addicted and I have tons of games, which add up most of my Bronze Trophies. I have 1,116. This is where the thanks come in. Not being able to get out much, I'm mainly stuck in, playing PS3,

socialising through games, or Facebook. It's also got me back into drawing, which has kept me sane. I get people to buy your magazine for me every time it's out, and it has helped me get the Platins and other Trophies, as well as decide what games to buy. And it stops me being so, so BORED in the house all the time. So this is a big thank you for helping me through the last year and a half. Love the magazine, looking forward to reading more.

I added a picture of my scar from surgery, which I think is pretty badass, one of the good things that came from surgery. Bit cruel but I told my cousin that I got it from running away from the boogeyman and that he got me in the back while I was running.

Steven Taylor, Caldicot

We've been getting so many sob story letters lately that I'd promised myself not to print any more, as it was starting to make me feel sad and I didn't want to encourage it any more. But I couldn't exactly not print a picture of that scar, which is indeed badass! And you're well within your rights to lie about how you got it. It's perfectly acceptable and should be encouraged, as decreed by the law of scars. Seriously, though, hope things start brightening up for you. Glad we're helping to cheer you up.

DRAW!

Hi, I have had a PS3 since March and am a keen artist. I enjoy most games, though my favourites include *Assassin's Creed* and *Red Dead Redemption*. I have done drawings of Ezio and Altair, however, I felt that Batman was of a higher standard and just more to your



● All we can think of to say is "Ow!"

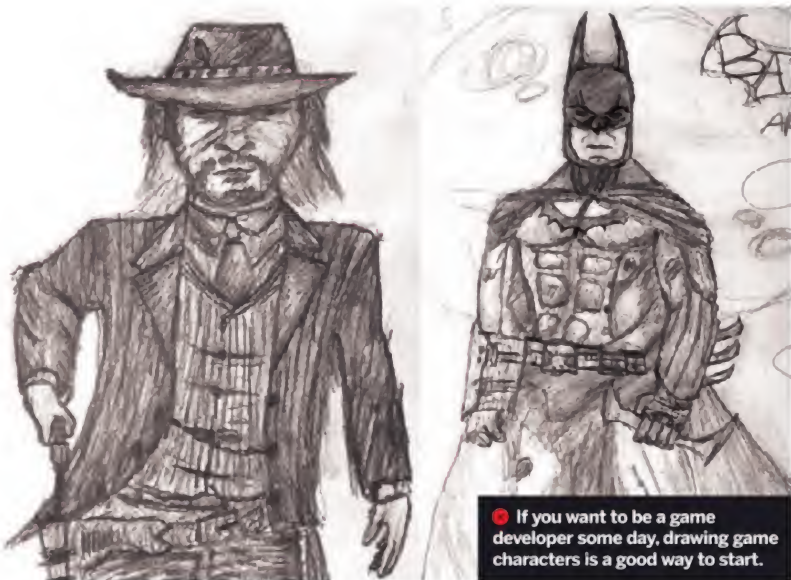
liking. I love gaming and I love art, and I feel gaming icons make brilliant drawings.

James Ash (aged 12), via email

This is what I like to see – a bit of creativity on the Play letters page. First cake, now these drawings. Good work, James, well deserving of a free game. And we especially love how you dressed Alan Sugar up as a cowboy.

Kratos... IN SPACE

I've recently completed *God Of War III* – excellent game, tantalising ending. But it has me wondering with the end leaving it open to further sequels, where do they go next? Zeus and other Gods have been defeated. Athena has been snubbed. So sitting in my car I've come up with a few ideas. Olympus BC has been the setting for the first few games so why



● If you want to be a game developer some day, drawing game characters is a good way to start.



Write in, and win! Every full-length letter we print receives a free game, courtesy of EA. For each letter we included this month, the sender wins a copy of EA Sports MMA, which is available now for the PS3 (£49.99).

✖ STUPID letter



Look at it, it's going to be beautiful.

LittleBig Tantrum

LittleBigPlanet was great. It was imaginative, creative, fun and cute, it's also fairly cheap now as you can get it for under £20. I think it is one of the greatest games ever. And now they are making a sequel. What is the point? A couple of reasons here to express my hatred of this game to you: First of all, everyone is going to get the sequel, so *LBP 1* will practically grind to a halt. There will be nobody to make any levels, so this will essentially force me to pay an extra £40 for the second one. Second, all the levels that I have spent time making will be forgotten. But worst of all, will it not take the fun out of the whole idea of the game? I mean the point of the first game was to do it all yourself, and now they are giving you all these circuit boards and mini-games! I mean it would be much more rewarding if you did it all yourself! C'mon Media Molecule, couldn't you have just quit while you were ahead? Remember the little people!

James Langford, via email

You couldn't be more wrong, James, and I'm confident you'll quickly change your mind when you get your hands on *LittleBigPlanet 2*. It's my hot tip for Best Game Ever, and I'm really not the sort to go 'round saying that about anything. Media Molecule didn't quit because it still has so much more to offer. To me, £40 for *LittleBigPlanet 2* sounds like the best bargain ever, too. You can't exactly argue that people haven't been given ample time to squeeze as much as they can out of the first game – it's got 2 million levels! All of which will be playable in *LittleBigPlanet 2*, of course.

F.A.Q.

How did you do that style on your logo in issue 195?

Ryan Gilbey, via email

Our designer – Imagine Publishing's Designer Of The Year 2009 – Ali says it's nothing technical. She just traced the logo with zigzag lines.

My wife came down stairs to see who was screaming like a girl only to find me behind the sofa!!

Geraint, Tyddyn Ni

We get pretty upset when we drop a Malteser and it rolls under the sofa, too.

I love my PlayStation but I think my girlfriend hates it as she believes I love it more... cough.

Adam Penny, Laura Believes? Or knows?

While reading your preview on *Medal Of Honor*, I noticed we had something in common – WE BOTH LOVE BEARDS!!! That is all.

James Ward, via email

This is exactly the kind of thing FAQs was made for.

Do I leave her before she leaves me?

Jonathan Jordan, Darlington

He's talking about his 60GB PS3. He's mad.

THIS MONTH, YOU'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT...



- How terrible your lives are **58%**
- Playing games 'til you're old and withered **31%**
- PlayStation Move **6%**
- Beards... IN SPACE! **5%**

PLAY
GOPLAY
the forum...



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Profile You have no new messages Log out [Tim]

Choice topics from the Play forum.
Join the discussion at www.play-mag.co.uk

SUBJECT: PLAY MAGAZINE DISCUSSION

Topic: Play Issue 196 Feedback

I went to CK's today to get food and saw the **Play** mag. A dilemma went through my head, "To buy **Play** mag and starve, or to eat and not starve?" I think you know which choice I picked.

Mr healey

SUBJECT: HEADLINES

Topic: Duke Nukem Forever - 2011

IT HAS A BEER BUTTON FOR GODS SAKE
the bossman

SUBJECT: GENERAL GAMING

Topic: MOH versus COD BO

I think that cods don't have body odour.
hazy89



● If *LittleBigPlanet 2* isn't the best game ever, then 'Kratos... IN SPACE' will be.

from where the GOW series has gone previously)... somehow.

Dean Brown, Leicester

Maybe it's because we all grew up watching *Button Moon*, but here at **Play** we believe it to be a scientific fact that anything – even household objects such as buttons, spoons and plastic funnels – can be improved by at least ten per cent simply by being... IN SPACE. Therefore we love your idea. Each of the planets in the solar system could be bosses and when Kratos defeats them they get renamed after the original Greek gods, rather than those Roman imposters. Then he could, like, go and punch the sun in the face and stuff. Brilliant.

The BURNING issues

The stuff we want to hear about!



1 Is your life basically perfect, like you live in *The Sims* or something, with nothing going particularly wrong for you at all?

2 Show us more scars and injuries. And lie about how you got them.

3 When you get *LittleBigPlanet 2*, what are you going to make first?

☒ **YES!** I would like to subscribe to Play

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PREVIEW

The game that will define the future of PlayStation



● The Chimera rules the US with an iron fist and plenty of guns.

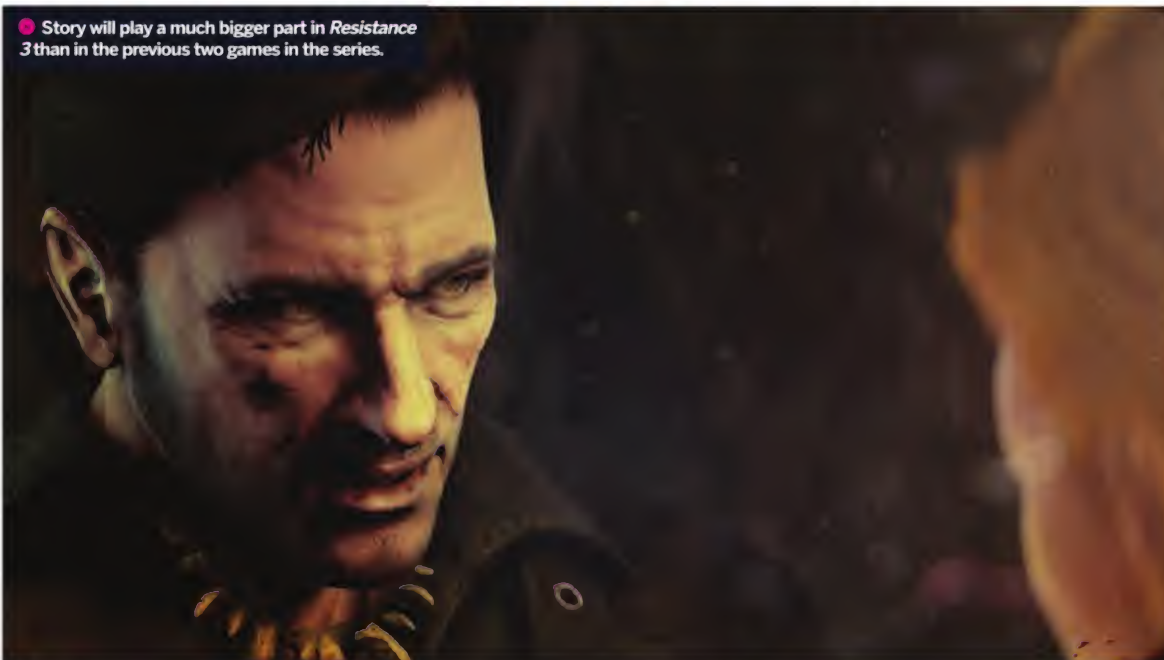
TRIMMING THE FODDER

Multiplayer could shrink for Resistance 3

WHILE MULTIPLAYER DETAILS for *Resistance 3* are a little limited we were given a few clues as to what to expect. For a start it was suggested that 60 players was a little over the top for multiplayer and that very few people actually took advantage of such numbers in online games. Insomniac also described MP as progression based, offering upgrades and unlockables as you level up. Then there were the maps, which will all be unique to the multiplayer game and set all over the world. No settings from the single-player will be repeated in online play.

As for co-op, Insomniac appears to be making the full campaign playable in co-op with no separate co-op mode, but the number of players has yet to be revealed.

● Story will play a much bigger part in *Resistance 3* than in the previous two games in the series.



● The game world has a dreary, post-apocalyptic feel.

● Joseph Evan Capelli – the man that killed Nathan Hale in *Resistance 2* – is the main character and protagonist in *Resistance 3*.

EXCLUSIVE

RELEASE DATE: TBC 2011

Resistance 3

I want to be a part of it...



Nathan Hale is dead. The Chimera have won. The world is lost. Such is the environment you enter when you'll begin playing *Resistance 3* next year. The ending of *Resistance 2*, as those of you who played it will know, was rather bleak and while the immediate threat of Daedalus was removed, the ultimate collapse of the human resistance to the might of a newly organised and focused Chimera force was inevitable. Now, the only objective is survival, but perhaps some new hope lies in the wasteland.

As you may know, the main character and protagonist of *Resistance 3* will be the man who put a bullet in Nathan Hale's brain, Joseph Evan Capelli. As another survivor of Project Abraham, the scheme that saw Hale injected with pure Chimera DNA, Capelli fought with the Special Research Projects Administration (SRPA). His attitude towards Hale was largely suspicious, but grew to be quite respectful over the course of the last game, however, he has a background of insubordination and distrust of authority. In other words, he's as good a hero for this new game as any.

However, having killed Hale, who Insomniac assured us would not be returning in any form (as a human or Chimera), Capelli has retreated from the conflict. *Resistance 3* is attempting to tell a very different kind of story this time around, showing the grass-roots battle for survival now that organised

armed conflict with the invading forces have failed. Capelli is the sole surviving Sentinel from *Resistance 2*, but begins this game with no intention of picking up arms again. He has run away with his wife and child seeking shelter from the Chimera death squads that now roam the land. However, word of a new hope for humanity reaches them. Capelli has always seemed a reluctant hero to us and it's no different here as it is his wife who convinces him to join a small band of resistance fighters to seek out this potential game-changing artefact.

And so the ball begins rolling for *Resistance 3* and what follows turns out to have been rather nicely teased by the trailer Insomniac revealed at

behind Project Abraham, the creator of the Cloven (half-human, half-Chimera beings that despise both sides) and the one responsible for the transformation of Jordan Shepard into Daedalus. It was believed that his guilt over his part in the downfall of humanity had led him to commit suicide, but this is now thrown into doubt. Whatever he has found in New York has clearly given him a second chance at redemption.

Regardless, the only way to get to New York would seem to be the use of the rail system, which itself is being operated by the Chimera. In other words, the train we all saw in the trailer was Chimera run with the human occupants simply hitching a

These simple folk with no military background, scraping the barrel to survive are what *Resistance 3* will be all about

gamescom earlier this year. From somewhere in middle-of-nowhere America Capelli and a band of untrained civilians with what weapons they can gather together are heading east to New York, Capelli's hometown, where they hope to find the key to their future survival. While Insomniac isn't being drawn on exactly what this mysterious, but potent item is it did reveal the source of its discovery; none other than Dr Fyodor Malikov.

Those boned up on *Resistance* lore will know Malikov as the man

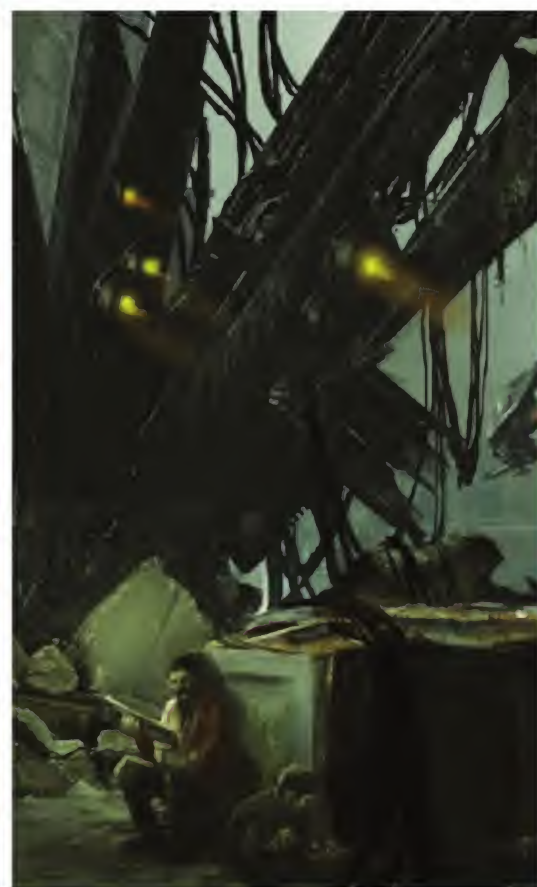
ride in secret. These simple folk with no military background, scraping the barrel to survive are what *Resistance 3* will be all about. Insomniac has told us there will be plenty of NPC interaction and back story to pick up on, not always in cut-scenes. Most of the information you pick up will be in-game from Capelli's perspective, catching snatches of conversation and finding items of interest in the world.

For starters your small band of fighters and survivors is not the only one in the US looking to take the fight ➤

PREVIEW



● Capelli could become a reluctant hero as the leader of a small band of resistance fighters.



➤ to the Chimera. These cells have no central leading figure and no way of communicating with one another. This could perhaps open the door for Capelli to rise as a hero, but we can't be sure of that at this point. In the end, Insomniac just wants to give players a feeling of what it would be like at the bottom of this awful situation and has been working hard to make it as engaging as possible.

As these images show quite nicely, *Resistance 3* has leapt forward graphically and this is testament to the way Insomniac has approached production of this sequel. Unlike the last two games it gave itself three years to put together this project spending a full year on pre-production alone. That's meant a year working on the engine, lighting, textures and story before the team even began to put anything together. The result of this intensive work is clearly higher production values and what promises to be a much tighter and more compelling experience.

Insomniac has explained its approach as seeking quality and depth rather than breadth. That means not spreading itself thin trying to do everything, but focusing in on what it's done well and the core elements it wants to excel at and making those superb. Tied into that is the story it wants to tell, the

pace of the game and the journey you're taken on.

In the end *Resistance 3* will essentially be a road movie, moving from Capelli's home to New York. Like any good road movie they'll meet many characters on the way and face many challenges.

One such challenge will appear in Haven, Oklahoma; a limited human outpost on the way to New York. Here you'll join up with what defences the locals have tracking down a marauding death squad of Chimera forces who are seeking out defenceless humans to kill. This chase sequence, moving through tunnels under the town, offers plenty of room for incidental

of these autonomous units work on levels. Having focused teams work on each level with the game director and producers overseeing the process means each and every level has been worked up as much as possible and no section of the game should be left behind the others. Whether a frantic action sequence or quieter introduction to new characters, Insomniac is promising background detail and depth like we've never seen in a *Resistance* game before.

And so here stands *Resistance 3*. A defiant stand on the part of Insomniac to prove the worth of the often-criticised franchise it has created. With this outing it seems

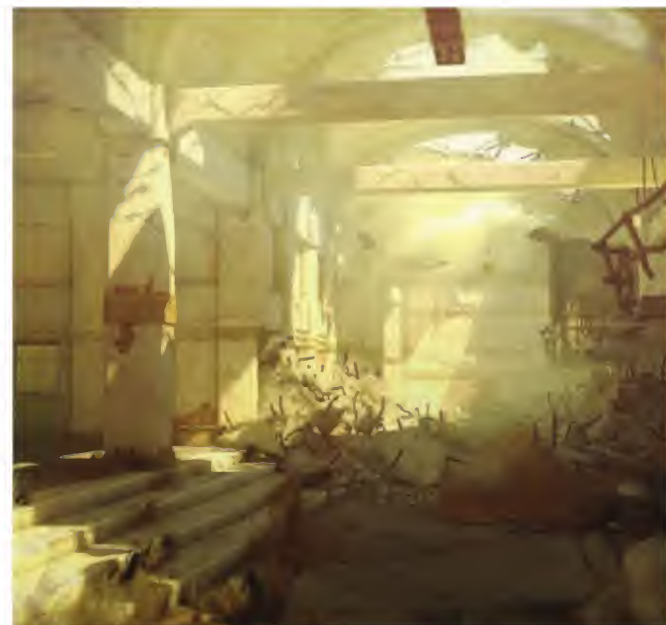
Resistance 3 is a defiant stand on the part of Insomniac to prove the worth of the often-criticised franchise it has created

conversation as well as showing off the great new lighting system. However, most of your time will likely be spent attempting to escape the dreaded Goliaths. The odds will constantly be stacked against you.

Set pieces certainly seem to be going up a gear in *Resistance 3*. After that year of pre-production Insomniac actually split itself into cells, mimicking the resistance it depicts in the game and had each

determined to bury any doubts about the quality of the world it has created and to fulfil its potential. In Capelli it may well have found the hero it has been looking for and in this new approach to the idea of a resistance movement it may also have found the gameplay hook that will propel *Resistance 3* into the highest level of PS3 gaming.

Resistance 3 is being developed by Insomniac. Check the website for more details: www.insomniacgames.com



● The story will focus on small groups of civilians with no military experience who are simply fighting to stay alive.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- There will be more focus on story than in previous games.
- More interaction between non-playable characters and the main protagonist.

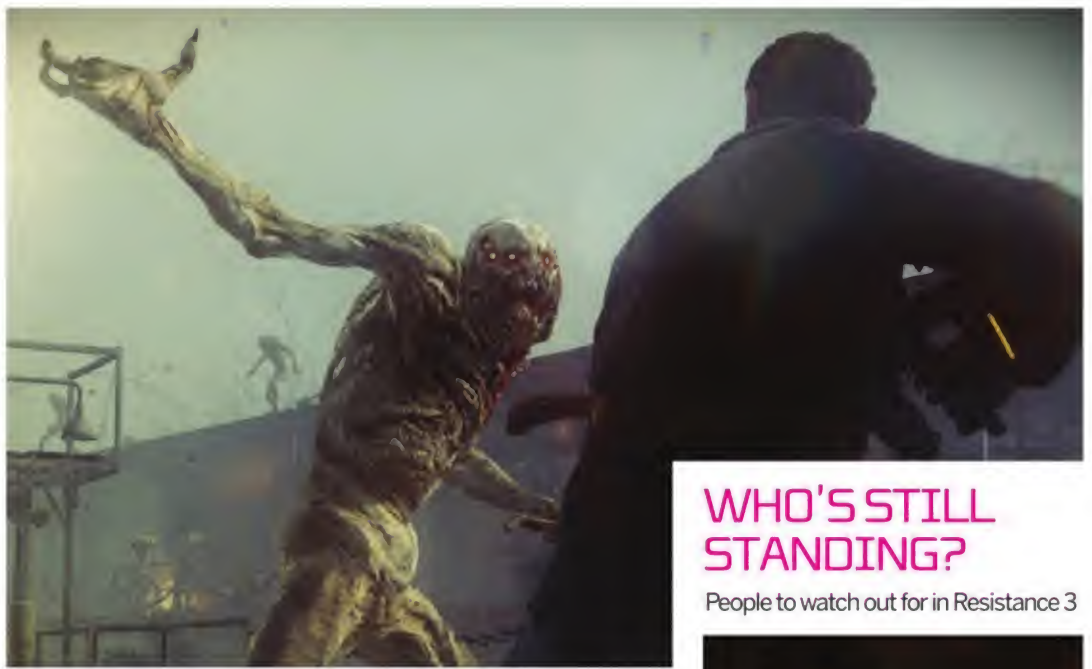
- Environments will be varied as you travel across the US with New York your destination.
- Story and settings are inspired by *District 9* and *The Road*.

READ ME

Insomniac will be looking to build on the success of *Resistance* and *Resistance 2*, which received 83% and 90% respectively in Play.



● Resistance 3 paints a grim picture of life in the US under the Chimera.



WHO'S STILL STANDING?

People to watch out for in Resistance 3



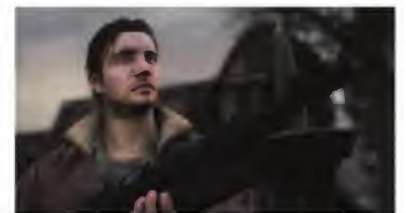
Joe Capelli Capelli was involved in Project Abraham, but the extent of his exposure to Chimeran DNA is unknown. He distrusts authority and believes the resistance will fail.



Cassandra Aklin The psychologist who worked with the soldiers in Project Abraham, Aklin had a relationship with Hale before he volunteered to fight in Europe.



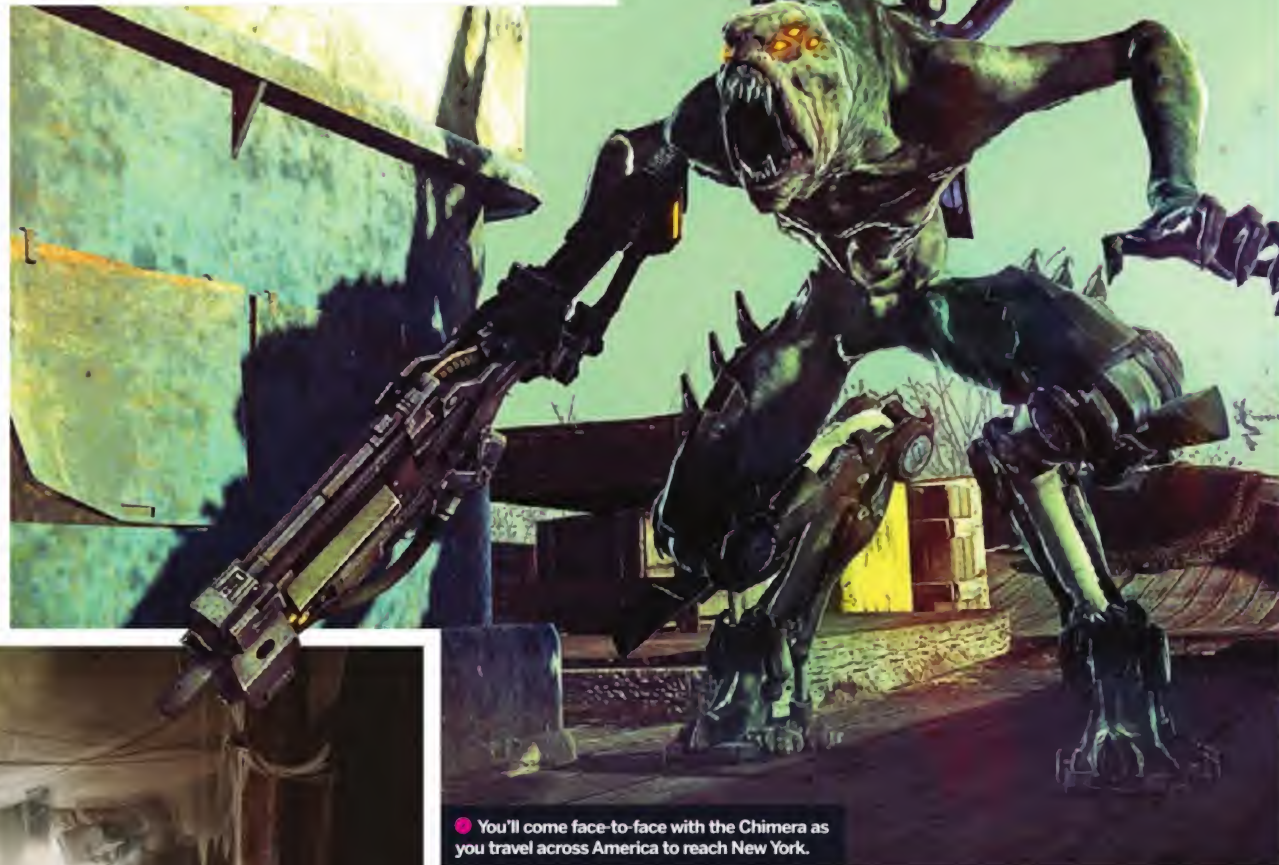
Fyodor Malikov Long assumed dead, Dr Malikov is actually alive and has identified something in New York that could turn the tide against the Chimeran occupation of the US.



James Grayson Grayson disappeared in Russia during *Resistance 2* according to intel and is officially MIA. However rumours of a 'Cloven Killer' in Russia suggest he is alive.



Rachel Parker Parker was last known to be preparing an offensive into Russia during *Resistance 2*. Her whereabouts are unknown, but she believes humanity can still win this war.



● You'll come face-to-face with the Chimera as you travel across America to reach New York.



PREVIEW

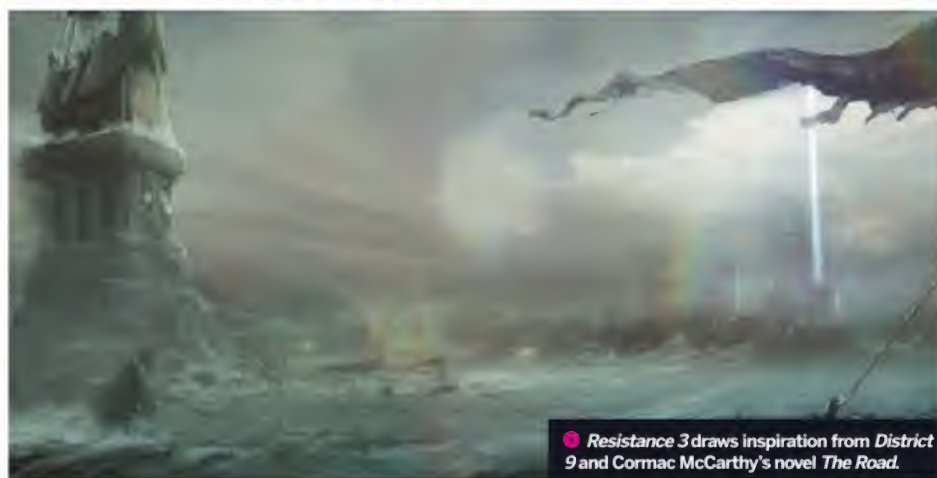


● Capelli is the last surviving Sentinel and as such could be humanity's last hope.



Read
more...

Read the rest of our
exclusive interview
at [play.co.uk/
interviews](http://play.co.uk/interviews)



● Resistance 3 draws inspiration from *District 9* and Cormac McCarthy's novel *The Road*.

Sleep Talking

We speak exclusively to writer Jon Paquette and lead designer Drew Murray

Can you give us some idea of the time frame for *Resistance 3*? How much time has passed since the events of *Resistance 2*?

JP: *Resistance 3* starts on 9 August 1957 – approximately four years after the end of *Resistance 2*. The game takes place over several days as Joe Capelli and Dr Malikov journey to New York City.

Has Joe Capelli changed significantly in the intervening years?

JP: Yes (spoiler alert for those who didn't finish *Resistance 2*). When Joe Capelli killed Nathan Hale, he became a pariah. Of course it was something he had to do – he saw Hale turning into a Chimera, and he knew how powerful Hale had become. In a way, it was a heroic choice for Capelli. But the rest of the military didn't see it that way. Capelli was dishonourably discharged and cast out. No longer was Capelli the brash, muscle-bound tough guy of one of the world's elite fighting forces. He became a common survivor, and found that there was more to live for than just fighting a futile battle against the Chimera. He fell in love, got married and had a son. When *Resistance 3* starts, Joe Capelli is a changed man, both physically and mentally. He is much thinner, and he survives not by fighting, but by hiding. But he still has a mean streak.

Capelli always gave the impression of being a reluctant hero when compared to Hale. Was this one of the reasons why you chose him as the main focus of *Resistance 3*?

JP: That is certainly part of Capelli's character. But in *Resistance 3*, his reluctance to fight has more to do with the events around him. In the past four years, the Chimera have essentially won the war. Humans no longer have an organised military force. There are no 'safe zones' left. The Chimera have stopped trying to convert humans – now they just outright kill. The only way that Capelli can survive, and also keep his family alive, is by staying away from the Chimera. So when he's forced back into action, like an old gunslinger, it is natural that he is reluctant to not only leave his family, but to take on a seemingly unbeatable foe.

Would we be right in thinking that Nathan Hale's foster sister Susan will have a large role to play in the game?

JP: If you read the *Resistance* novel *A Gathering Storm*, you know that Nathan Hale's parents died young, and he was brought up in a foster family. His foster sister, Susan, played a large role in the novel. And she returns in *Resistance 3* as Joe Capelli's wife.

This is a very different form of 'resistance' to the first two games. Has that impacted on the gameplay at all?

DM: With human industry and manufacturing nonexistent, players will be using a lot more Chimera and improvised (read: exotic) weapons than they did in the first two games. Certain Chimera species have 'gone native,' creating unique ecosystems within the ruins and rubble of destroyed America that are separate from the organised Chimera military. And we've put a lot of time and effort into prototyping and iterating on unique scenarios for the player to break up our core combat – there will be a lot more variety to the player experience in *Resistance 3* than there was in the earlier games.

Watching the teaser trailer from gamescom, the first comparison point that sprung to mind was *Left 4 Dead*. Are you looking to capture a similar feeling of survival at all costs?

DM: We definitely share some thematic similarities – small groups of survivors in a hostile world, battling against overwhelming odds – although that one-line description could apply just as aptly to *Half-Life 2* as well. I think it's a key difference from the first two *Resistance* games that *Resistance 3*

isn't a military story, following best-of-the-best super-soldiers on their military campaign. *Resistance 3* is the story of one man, fighting against nearly impossible odds for purely personal reasons. It's also the story of how 'normal' people are surviving, and the myriad ways that different groups are coping with the fact that their world has been utterly overtaken by a malignant alien force. In any event, we're huge fans of Valve here at Insomniac and consider the comparisons nothing but flattering.

Can you tell us a little bit about the way co-op works in *Resistance 3*? Will you be playing as some of the other survivors?

DM: We're bringing back two-player co-operative mode through the campaign for *Resistance 3*, which you can play split-screen or online. We had a very vocal group speak up when we didn't have campaign co-op in *Resistance 2*, and there is something very special and unique about playing back-to-back with your buddy through the campaign. There will be several unique co-operative mechanics to allow you to assist and rescue your co-operative partner that won't exist in the single-player campaign. The second co-op player will play as a character from Haven, Oklahoma,



Capelli's adopted hometown where *Resistance 3* begins.

To what degree do you consider the main story to be a solo affair? Will it be as potent when played with others?

DM: The campaign is one man's story – the story of Joe Capelli and the lengths to which he'll go in an attempt to create a future for his family. That said, a significant theme of the game is that, now that the war against the Chimera has been 'lost', the remaining survivors have to help one another or no one will survive. From that perspective, playing co-operatively is a literal manifestation of 'we fight together or we die alone.'

Managing to release an entire trilogy of games in a single generation is also a great achievement. Was this an aim you had set yourselves?

DM: It wasn't an explicit plan, but given Insomniac's history with the *Ratchet & Clank* and *Spyro* franchises, it's not too surprising that we're releasing a trilogy within a console generation. *Resistance: Fall Of Man* was a significant departure from what Insomniac had been doing for the previous eight or nine years, both thematically and genre-wise, and our focus was on putting out an amazing launch title. We've been deeply honoured by the fan and critical response to the *Resistance* franchise and couldn't be more excited to have the opportunity to continue telling the *Resistance* story.



● *Resistance 3* is more about survival than taking the fight to the Chimera with manic set pieces like this likely to dominate.

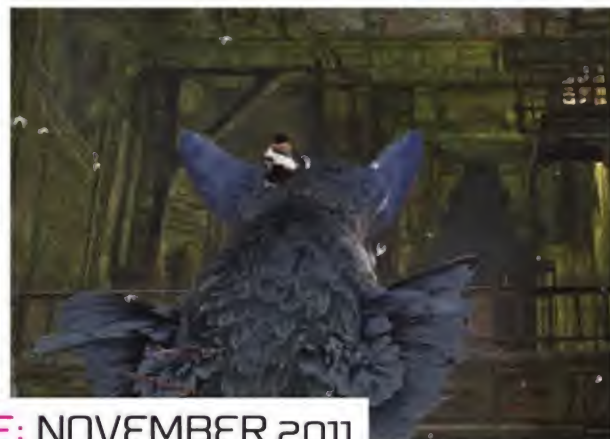
PREVIEW



It's clear that *The Last Guardian* won't be confined to indoor locations.



The old adage that you shouldn't work with animals or children clearly doesn't apply here.



RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 2011

The Last Guardian

The final countdown can finally begin



First things first, is this game actually going to come out?

Yes. At the Tokyo Games Show Sony revealed a 'Holiday 2011' release window for Team Ico's latest title. We would go so far as to say that's most likely going to mean a November release date.

That would make it six years since *Shadow Of The Colossus* came out. What's taken them so long?

Well, Fumito Ueda addressed that at TGS, too. Apparently Team Ico changed its development process on PS3, spending a lot of time working on the tech behind the game in R&D before putting anything together. Back in the PS2 days the dev would work on tech at the same time as developing the game, story and world. Anyway, that's why we've been waiting such a long time and why we've seen so little of the game. That and Team Ico's natural secrecy regarding its new titles.

So, what did Sony show as TGS?

We got a new trailer and a bunch of new screens. What the trailer

aimed to do was give you a more detailed look at the way the boy and Trico (the strange creature) interact and work together. That includes watching Trico swat an armed guard out of the way, picking up the boy in his mouth to help him reach new vantage points or simply get him from one place to another and using his body as a bridge for the boy to cross. You can also see some images of the boy bringing Trico cauldrons full of some sort of glowing, smoking substance. Best guess is that these are potions, perhaps for his health.

What's the ultimate goal though?

We don't know and frankly we don't expect to know until the end of the game. Given this developer's track record we don't expect to get the full revelation of what *The Last Guardian* is all about until just before the final credits. For all we know it's all just a dream inside Kratos's head. Although, we imagine his dreams are a bit more violent than this.

So you're working together to do something, but we don't know what?



In a staring contest Trico was always the more likely to win.



As a little and large combo, the boy and Trico each have their jobs to do.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Promises to be another amazing adventure from the maker of *Ico* and *SOTC*.
- A superbly animated and believable creature to interact and work with.

- Full of all the mystery and intrigue we've come to expect from Team Ico.
- Yet another PS3 exclusive delivering amazing visuals like nothing we've seen before.

Basically yeah, but there are some clues. It's all pointing to an escape from the ruins of an old compound. The guards don't seem to be fighting back much yet, but then there are plenty of images of Trico with spears and arrows in him and they must have come from somewhere. Then there's the early trailers that show Trico chained up. Doesn't get much more blatant than that.

So how does this whole relationship work?

This seems to be the main focus. Ueda has explained that Trico and the boy won't be the best of friends at first. That kind of comes through from the start of the new trailer where the little rascal is jumping on Trico's head to wake him up. As the game goes on, though, and they have to work more closely together the relationship will change and the bond will develop, hopefully just as it develops with you.

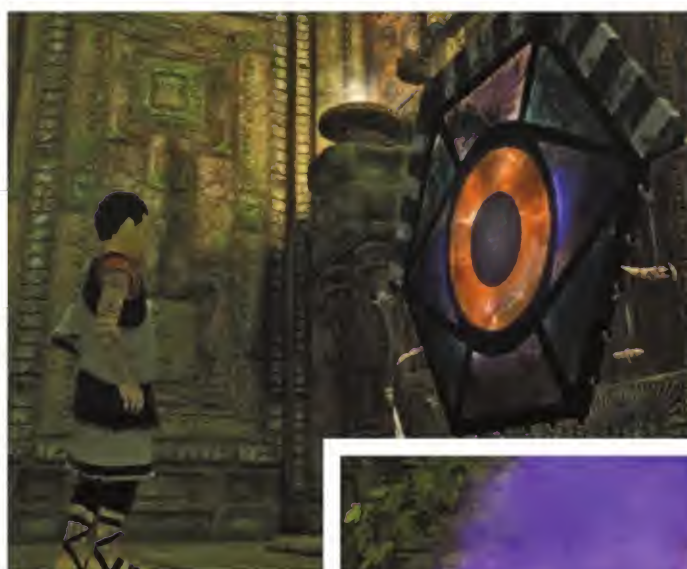
And what about the whole *Ico*/*Shadow Of The Colossus* tie-in?

Ueda won't commit to anything. He insists the link between the first two games was a last-minute decision and he isn't thinking about linking this one in, but who knows? He may change his mind and suddenly we'll have a full-on trilogy.

The *Last Guardian* is being developed by the artisans at Team Ico. If you can make sense of Japanese take a look at www.jp.playstation.com/scej/title/trico

READ ME

Team Ico isn't ruling out 3D and Move support for *The Last Guardian*, but claims it is already maxing out the PS3, so it would be tricky.

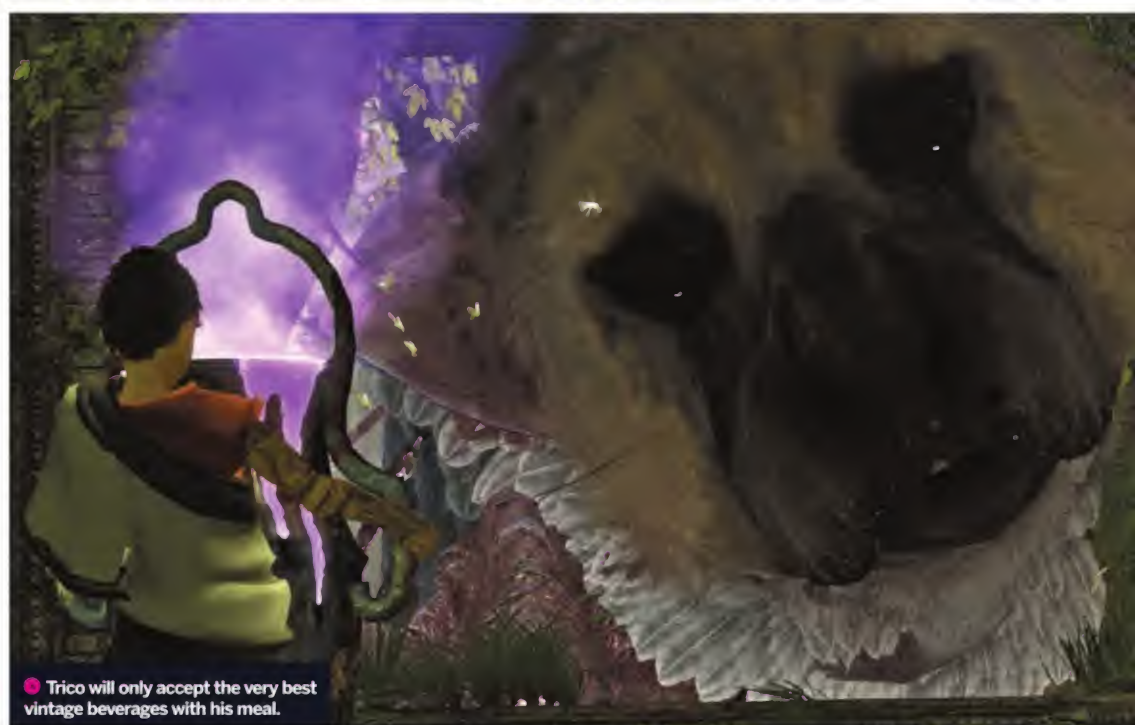


Call us mad, but we're betting on the big bird/cat thing in this little fight.

BODY LANGUAGE

The most realistic fake animal of 2011 revealed

No matter how much we see of *The Last Guardian* we continue to be amazed by the animation and interactivity of Trico. Its movements are so lifelike and reminiscent of both a cat and a bird. It should be odd and it should be unbelievable, but somehow Team Ico has done an amazing job of making it all fit together. Throw in the way it reacts to the environments, tearing tiles from the floor as it scrapes its claws on the floor. It's astonishing.

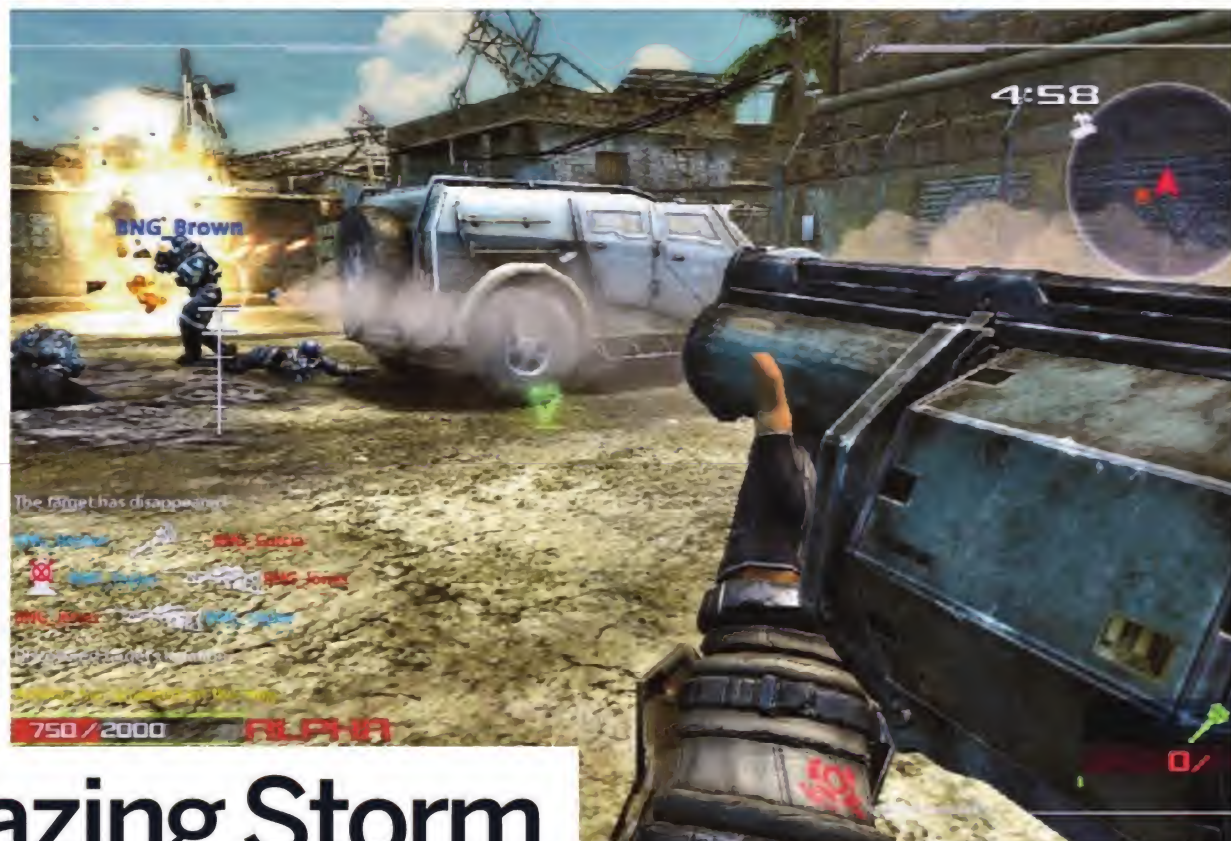
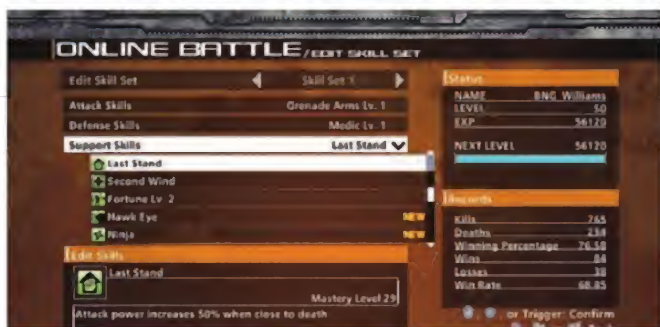
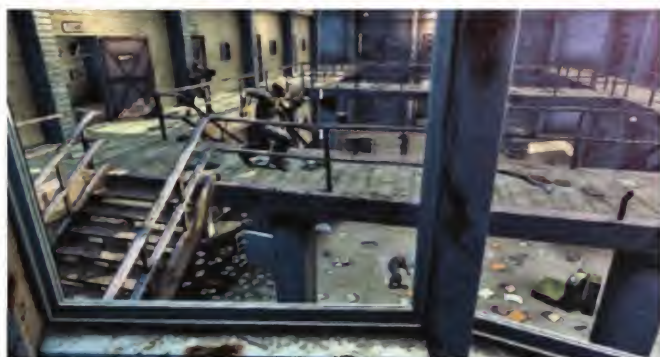


Trico will only accept the very best vintage beverages with his meal.

PREVIEW



● This chap looks like a Helghast. He probably isn't.



RELEASE DATE: 12 NOVEMBER

Time Crisis: Razing Storm

Three become one – it's where the action(!) begins

PS3 This new *Time Crisis* game – or collection of games, more accurately – is being pushed by many as another game to add to the Move-controlled pile. It is, that's true, but it can also be controlled with the G-Con 3 or just a standard pad, if you're a boring pauper. But we're going to focus on

Razing Storm is just one of three games on offer

PlayStation Move here – as it's the 'exciting new technology, woo!' – to follow the company line.

Razing Storm is just one of the three games on offer in this package, and offers a mix of both classic

Time Crisis-style action(!) and a new, slightly confusing, slightly disconcerting mode in the shape of story. Whereas arcade keeps things well within the realms of the classic mechanics – on-rails, hide behind cover (your arm-mounted shield), pop out and shoot lots of goons – story mode, on the other hand, makes things into more of an FPS, allowing the player control over when and where they

move before sticking to cover and acting like classic *Time Crisis* again. We haven't been hearing glowing praise of this mode, but if it does end up working well, it could be a nice addition to the formula.

Also included in the package is *Time Crisis 4* (69%, **Play 166**) – it's not awful, but it certainly isn't the peak of the series. But it's part of the package, so you're not buying *Razing Storm* solely for a not-very-good lightgun game.

The third and final offering is *Deadstorm Pirates*, which looks to be a pleasant surprise. It's a very recent arcade lightgun title where two players can team up to gun down zombie pirates, sea monsters and other such scurvy-toting horrors from the waves. Basically, it's the one we're looking forward to the most out of all three games.

Time Crisis: Razing Storm is being developed by Nex Development. Check out www.time-crisis.com for details.



● It's not stunning to look at, we'll be honest.



ACTION! [ONLINE]

An online game where you shoot people? It'll never work

We haven't been shown or told a great deal about online as of yet, aside from the fact it exists. We have our reservations as to how well it will control, and as to how it will actually play in the first place. Still, we're more than willing to give it a chance, as competitive *Time Crisis* is something we've wanted forever.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

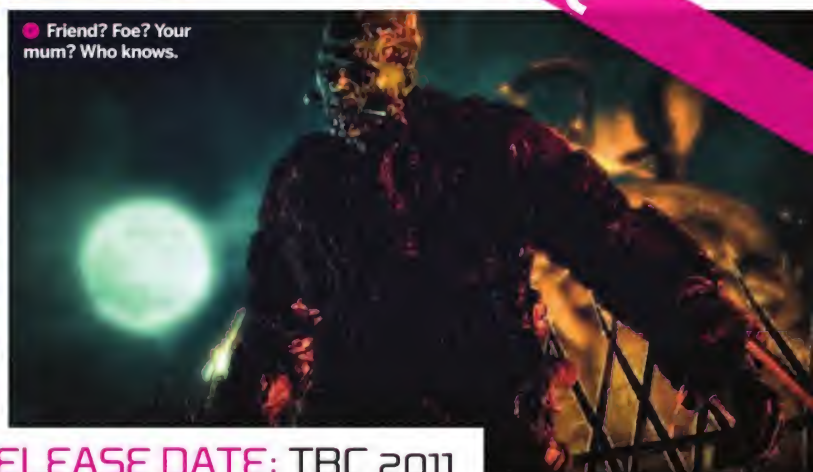
- Three games in one – can't really complain about that.
- It will probably (hopefully) be better than *Time Crisis 4*'s original PS3 release.
- We don't get enough lightgun games these days, so it's welcome.
- It features Full Destructible Scenery™! Or something like that.

READ ME

The original *Time Crisis*, released 1995, ported to PSone in 1997, is still really good fun. You should play it if you get the chance.



● Friend? Foe? Your mum? Who knows.



RELEASE DATE: TBC 2011

Shadows Of The Damned

A threesome from the depths of hell

PS3

What the hell is this?

This is the latest game from Grasshopper Manufacture – creator of the *No More Heroes* series, among others.

So?

So... Grasshopper is headed by Goichi Suda, or Suda51. He's quite an interesting developer in that he makes games that tend not to fall into line with whatever else is popular.

... So?

So Grasshopper, headed by Suda51, is teaming up with Shinji Mikami – one of the minds behind...

Resident Evil, Viewtiful Joe, Devil May Cry, God Hand and Vanquish.

Correct. So we have a collaboration between two of the most interesting Japanese devs around today, along with the musical mind behind *Silent Hill*'s best, most haunting music.

Akira Yamaoka?

Yes. They're all working on a game where a motorcycle-riding, massive-gun-wielding, tattooed badass by the name of Garcia Hotspur...

the many horrors hell can unleash at him on his way to rescue his kidnapped 'true love'. Romance and extreme violence, it seems.

And how is Garcia Tottenham going to get his true love back?

Hotspur is going to ride his bike and blast his way through legions of hell's minions. The action will be of the third-person variety – like *Resi 4*, and that's no bad thing at all.

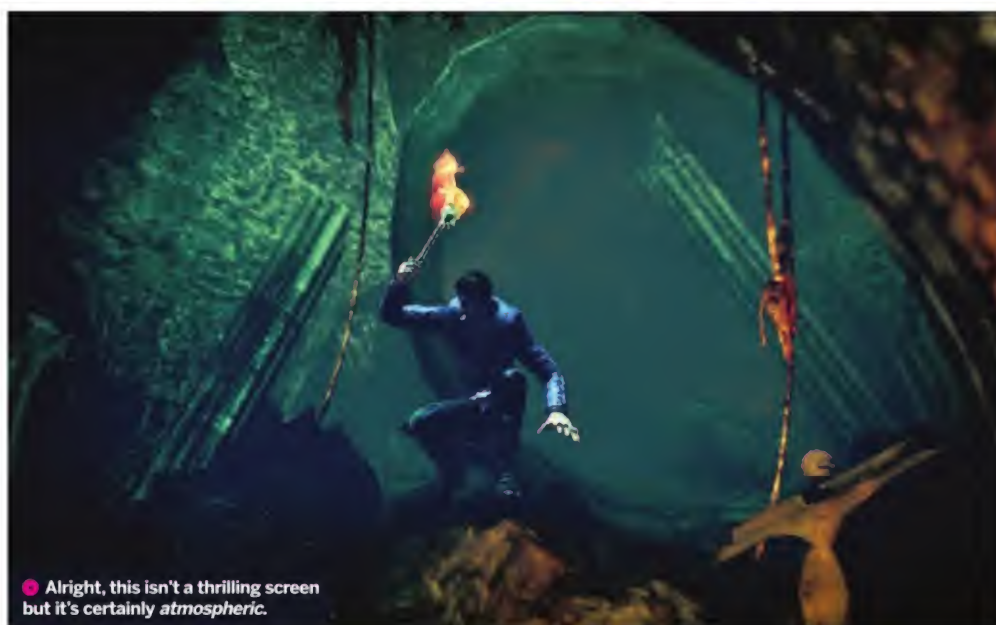
But it doesn't exactly look very interesting, does it?

We agree. The main character looks bland and the setting doesn't look to be that different from what has come before in other games. But other games didn't have the all-star threesome backing them up like *Shadows Of The Damned* does.

So you're saying I should care?

It's nice to meet someone who actually gets us. That is *exactly* what we're saying. Get beyond the looks and rest easy in the fact that you've got the interesting design, fantastic action game and great music angles covered by those making the game.

Shadows Of The Damned is being developed by Grasshopper Manufacture. Visit <http://bit.ly/a3w5xq> for more info.



● Alright, this isn't a thrilling screen but it's certainly atmospheric.



● That's more like it! Blam! Boom! Kapow!



HD FURY

It looks better but it looks worse
SHADOWS OF THE DAMNED is Grasshopper's first HD title, working as it has previously on past-generation consoles and the Wii. It makes us wonder that maybe this is why it doesn't look as visually thrilling as the likes of *No More Heroes* does – is it an acclimatisation period to the new visual fidelity? Or is this just nonsense speculation? You decide.

Garwhat Whowhat?

Garcia Hotspur, who fights through

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- This is a heavenly collaboration, regardless of all the demons.
- Any game with a punk rock attitude is going to get us interested.

- Hopefully it will be as over the top as we're expecting it to be.
- The collaboration is so exciting it's worth mentioning twice.

READ ME

Suda51 and Shinji Mikami also worked on *Killer7*. By that standard, *Shadows Of The Damned* should be inaccessible yet hailed as a masterpiece by some.

PREVIEW



WEATHER OR NOT

Bringing out the weather forecaster in you



IF YOU'RE GOOD at spotting when it's going to rain in real life, then you should be good at knowing exactly when to pit and change to wet tyres in *Gran Turismo Sport's* endurance races. The atmosphere gradually gets hazy, overcast and cloudy well before any actual precipitation starts. Also look out for cows lying down in fields...



● The GT By Citroën is quite a step-up from the 2CV.

UPDATE



RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

Gran Turismo 5

Slippery when wet. And shiny. And sparkling. Mmmm...



Talking about the weather is something normally associated with having nothing else to talk about, but we don't want you to think that's the case here. We are going to talk about the weather in *Gran Turismo 5*, but not because there's nothing left to discuss – although admittedly, we've covered an awful lot already. The weather in *Gran Turismo 5* is interesting because it looks lovely and because it really is dynamic. Where other games will have a handful of set weather conditions and transitions between them, *Gran Turismo 5* has three meteorological parameters – humidity, temperature and pressure – from which the game automatically calculates exactly what the weather should be like on the fly. We have no idea what impact this has on gameplay, but it's definitely the cleverest weather system we've heard of in a game.

Enough about the weather, though, let's talk about cars (then, if there's time, boobs and football). Polyphony has revealed (or at least sort of revealed) what must surely be the fastest car ever to appear in a *Gran Turismo* game, or any other driving simulator for that matter. The

Project X1 Prototype is a theoretical concept model created especially for *Gran Turismo 5* by engineers at Red Bull Racing and, while it doesn't exist and probably never will, we're assured that it could be made for real were regulations and cost not issues.

The X1 is the perfect car for anyone who feels that the early-Eighties was the golden age of motorsport. Racing technology had been getting better and better throughout the 20th Century but reached a point in the Eighties where it was just too dangerous and since then all major motorsport authorities have been imposing more and more safety regulations. Technology hasn't stopped advancing, but most of the really exciting stuff simply isn't allowed so no one ever gets to see it. At least until now. The X1 is the car Red Bull would make if there were a sport that allowed turbochargers, ground effect aerodynamics, active suspension and had no restrictions on weight, fuel, materials or power. It's... phwoar!

Polyphony hasn't really revealed the X1 properly, showing nothing more than close-ups and silhouettes, but as far as we can tell it looks much like a fairly typical sports

prototype model, only it presumably has a 10,000cc engine and goes at least 400km/h (250mph). It'd no doubt be horrendously dangerous were it real, but in *Gran Turismo 5* we imagine it's going to be one of everyone's favourite cars ever. You'll crash it lots, but this won't result in decapitation – not even for your in-game driver.

A few more special cars have been revealed, including the Isuzu 4200R and GT By Citroën concepts and some comically out of place old VWs, but nothing as sexy as that X1. Professional racing drivers are pretty sexy, though, and *Gran Turismo 5* will feature several, including Jeff Gordon, Sébastien Loeb, Sebastian Vettel and The Stig who will all host their own special licensed events. These won't just be branded championships either – each will have a twist. For example, Sébastien Loeb's rally driving events will have you racing over randomly generated special stages, so you'll never get bored of racing the same courses.

Anyway, enough about *GT5* – miserable weather today...

Gran Turismo 5 is being developed by Polyphony Digital. Check the website for more details: www.polyphony.co.jp

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The best things come to those who wait, and we have waited and waited and waited.
- It just looks bloody brilliant, but you knew that already...
- It boasts an infinite number of randomly generated rally stages.
- Features a car that is so fast, it's not even allowed to exist.

READ ME

The wait for *Gran Turismo 5* has been so long that even many Le Mans 24 Hours drivers haven't had the endurance to stick it out.



PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY 2011

Homefront

Back to the 'front

PS3

When we were first introduced to *Homefront* this year, we were surprised that the single-player campaign was being pushed to the fore and that multiplayer was scarcely mentioned. Developer Kaos Studios' only other game was the very multiplayer-orientated *Frontlines: Fuel Of War* (the PS3 version of which was cancelled), so it was interesting to see horizons getting broadened and priorities being switched. Now

basically Domination with a slight twist. There are three control points and your team scores by controlling as many of them as possible, the twist being that the control points are arranged roughly in a line and when the score limit is reached, that round ends and the line of control points moves towards the losing team's side of the map for the next round. This is a little bit of a nod to *Frontlines* and basically means the losing team gets a bit of a chance

size as a typical *Call Of Duty* map, with Farm weighing in quite a lot bigger, but not *Battlefield* sized. This was a bit of a surprise actually, as we were expecting something more like *Battlefield* than *COD*, but that's not really what we got. It has vehicles, which *Call Of Duty* doesn't any more, but they actually work quite a lot like Killstreaks, thanks to *Homefront*'s Battle Point system.

Battle Points are earned in the usual ways XP is earned in these kinds of games – kills, headshots, revenge kills, team actions and so on – and can either be spent at any time on one of three special abilities selected as part of your loadout or can be saved up until you die and spent on a vehicle in which you will respawn. We like how vehicles are earned and not just sitting there waiting for the player who runs to them fastest, although it is a bit weird that you have to die before getting to use them. You can

also spawn into a team-mate's vehicle if it has space, which again is a bit weird, but is a good way to get straight back into the thick of it. Plus, some vehicles have gunner seats and the like, so you can provide additional firepower.

Vehicles felt a bit confined on Farm and their presence somehow unrealistic, but they were less overpowering than we'd expected, mainly because Kaos has ensured that infantry are well equipped to counter them. One of the special grenade types available is an EMP, which completely shuts down the drive systems on any vehicle caught in its blast and dramatically slows the movement of its turret, if it has one, for about 30 seconds. This is an effective attack and staying inside an EMPed vehicle is a risky move as it will be vulnerable to assault from other vehicles and from various infantry special abilities. These include missile and rocket launchers as well as remote

It's hard to say whether Homefront will rival Call Of Duty's multiplayer modes

that hands-on time has come around, though, it's multiplayer that we get to try out first. This could be a sign of a greater confidence in multiplayer still pervading at Kaos, or perhaps it's just a more effective way to give us a decent amount of time with the game without giving too much away.

In the time we had, we got acquainted with one game mode, two maps and a bunch of different equipment loadouts. The game mode we played was Ground Control, which is

to even the scores because they're spawning closer to the control points in the second round. The match is won by the first team to take two rounds.

We didn't play any other modes but we did play Ground Control across two very different maps. Cul-de-Sac takes place in a devastated suburban residential area and supports up to 16 players with no vehicles. Farm is a bigger, more open map that supports up to 32 players with vehicles allowed. The former is about the same kind of

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME

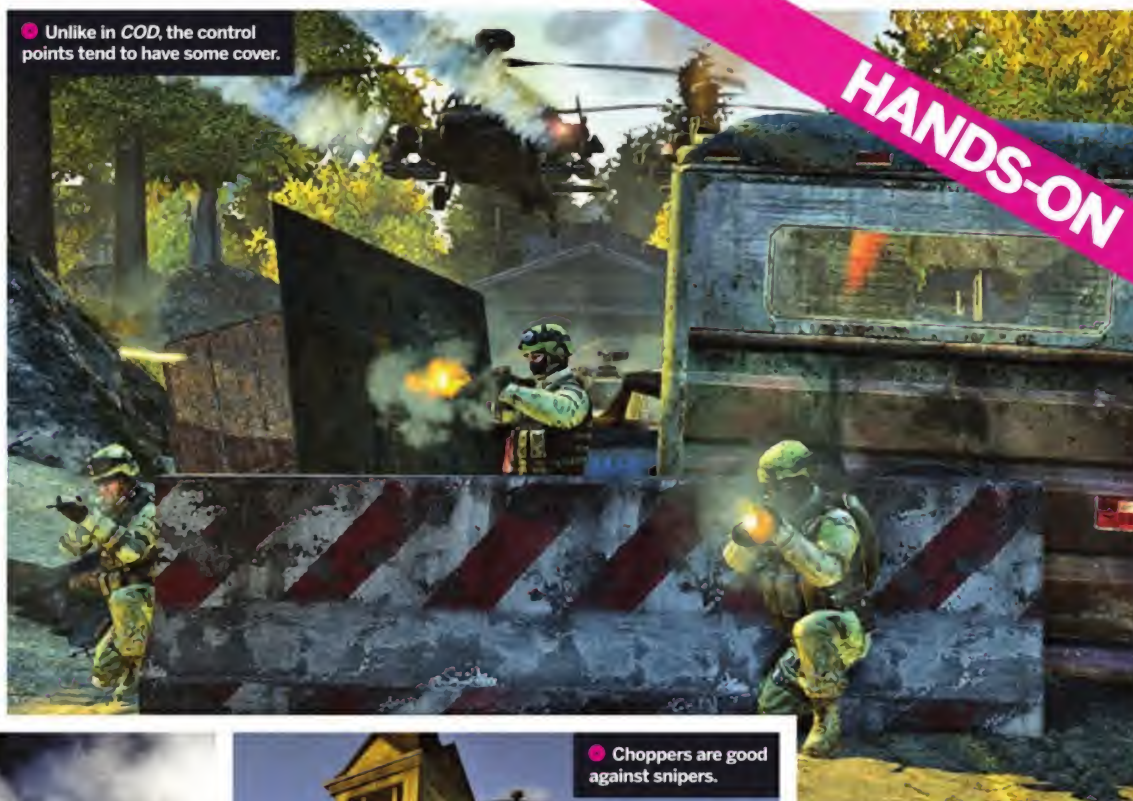
- There are a wide variety of 'toys' and vehicles to play with.
- Special abilities are geared towards tactics rather than sheer power.

- It accommodates higher numbers of players well. Which is good for multiplayer.
- US civilian battlegrounds make a change from the norm.



● If three members of your team get a chopper, you'll win.

● Unlike in COD, the control points tend to have some cover.



HANDS-ON



● Even if you don't get a tank, you can always hide behind someone else's.



● Choppers are good against snipers.



MUCH 'COP[TER]?

Blades of glory

THE HELICOPTER WAS the most expensive (in terms of Battle Points) toy we got to play with during our hands-on, but we're not sure we found it the most useful. It's easy enough to fly around, but actually aiming is a different matter. It fires rockets, which you'd think wouldn't require much accuracy, but they didn't seem to have much of an area of effect. We can understand why Kaos wouldn't want to overpower them too much, but we'd hope that in the final game things that go boom will have a more realistic killing potential.

control drones armed with powerful weaponry or even recon equipment. You can order as many as you like as long as you have the Battle Points to spend, so you don't get the frustration of firing two rockets into a tank then having to run off to a resupply station to get more. Special abilities feel much like Killstreaks because of the way you unlock them and because of the nature of some of them. But the fact that you don't lose your Battle Points when you die and that you can buy as many as you like if you can afford them levels the playing field in terms of the way they're used because anyone can use the big hitters if they save up, and because cagey, negative styles of play are less rewarded than they are when you have to get streaks.

From this early build, it's hard to say whether *Homefront* has what it takes to rival *Call Of Duty*'s multiplayer dominance. We suspect not, but it certainly has the potential to provide a fun, slightly larger-scale alternative.

Homefront is being developed by Kaos Studios. Check the website for more details: www.kaosstudios.com

READ ME

Kaos Studios is best known for its multiplayer expertise, having first come into existence off the back of the success of a superb *Battlefield 1942* mod.



● Tanks are vulnerable against choppers because they can't aim very far up.

PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: 19 NOVEMBER

Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit

In pursuit of arcade racing greatness

PS3 Our first race on Criterion's entry to the *Need For Speed* series didn't impress. It felt like a surprisingly slow take on *Burnout*, just with real cars and nicer looks. Fortunately, we played more than just a single, solitary game of *Hot Pursuit* – if we'd stuck with that one single race, those four minutes or so could have negatively coloured our judgement for years to come. But it only took about half of a race, being pursued by the fuzz and caning it in a Bugatti Veyron to realise that this could turn out to be one of the best arcade

it is luscious-tasting. We seem to be getting bogged down in hyphens and cake metaphors, so let's move on.

One of the first things that struck us about *Hot Pursuit* was how good it looks, with the Seacrest County area looking almost as striking as the beautiful, beautiful cars that race around its varied locales. And as for the lighting... oh! The lighting...

We were able to try out four modes in our preview build, taking in both the sides of cops and racers. Race mode is, unsurprisingly, the straightforward race mode. This plays out the most like *Burnout*

The Seacrest County area looks almost as striking as the beautiful, beautiful cars that race around its varied locales

racers out there. To say that in the same year we've had *Split/Second* and *Blur* is to say quite a lot, especially at such an early stage.

Hot Pursuit mixes elements from *Burnout* – boosting, takedowns and rewarding risky driving – with classic mechanics from the original *NFS 3: Hot Pursuit* – intense police chases, open, shortcut-filled routes and real-world supercars. The resulting game-cake is as delicious-looking as

games, in fact being more like the earlier games in the series than anything else – though our early version didn't have a great deal of traffic to avoid. This could be a design decision, though, rather than something missing.

Interceptor was announced early on after *Hot Pursuit*'s reveal and sees a one-on-one chase take place, with the player taking the role of the cop. The AI car being chased does not

operate on a pre-determined route, meaning they are free to go any way they see fit on the map – this leads to a fair few handbrake turns, unsurprisingly. To help you catch the perp, your cop car is armed with EMP blasts, to shoot at the suspect, spike strips, to lay out behind you, and the ability to call in road blocks and air support, both of which can help slow down or damage the opponent, ultimately 'busting' them by taking their energy bar down to zero. This mode is intense, and can last anything up to six or seven minutes per session (or more, if you're quite bad at it). Keeping up this level of excitement for a fair amount of driving time is a great notch in Criterion's bedpost, and this mode is fantastic fun.

Hot Pursuit mode takes Interceptor and ramps it up a few notches, allowing you to play as either side of the law. Racers have to get to the finish line, un-busted and in as high a finishing place as possible. Cops, on the other hand, have to stop all six racers before they reach the finish. Again, cops can use their weapons as in Interceptor mode, and the racers have the chance to use theirs, which include a turbo (faster than boost) and radar

jammer in place of helicopter and road block support. While it doesn't last quite as long as Interceptor, seeing as there is a definite end, it still manages to be an intense and ridiculously exciting game mode to play, regardless of which side of the law you choose to play on.

Preview mode also popped up a couple of times, offering us the chance to test out another ridiculous vehicle – like the Corvette ZR1, for example. The offerings on our preview were simple par-time runs, demanding we get to the finish line under a certain time and with as little damage as possible. It's fun to get away from the threat of the cops, and running a perfect line throughout the whole course is something that could be as compelling as it is competitive.

Ultimately it will all come down to how the whole package holds together, as well as if Criterion can iron out a few issues present in the preview code. We're sure it will, though. Which just leaves it up to the developer to bring us a coherent, varied and interesting package: something Criterion pretty much specialises in. *Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit* can't arrive fast enough – even when it's travelling at 220 miles an hour – it's fast, smooth, great-looking and sounds phenomenal – those engines send shivers up our collective spine.

Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit is being developed by Criterion Games. Check out www.hotpursuit.needforspeed.com for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- A fine mixture of *Need For Speed* and *Burnout* sensibilities.
- Very, very fast when it needs to be. And also very, very fun.
- Being a cop brings a whole new angle to the experience.
- *Hot Pursuit* is a really nice game to look at. Really, it is.

READ ME

Hot pursuit is a real, genuine, actual term that is used by the police to describe... well, a car chase, unsurprisingly. The more you know.





MUTUAL NEED (FOR SPEED)

You don't have to play together to play together

EA HAS INTRODUCED a new feature, named Autolog, to bridge the gap between *Hot Pursuit*'s single-player and multiplayer experiences. While the cynic could point out it is little more than smooth, built-in leaderboard functionality with the ability to compare and share things like race times and photos taken with the game's photo function, we're... well, yes, we're cynical. But that's not to say it isn't an interesting feature. Streamlining the ability to compare your times, takedowns and arrests against your friends couldn't be anything other than a good thing.



This is genuinely how they arrest people in America.



PREVIEW



● Keith, Play's own editor, went to Dubai on holiday this month. He can confirm the presence of shiny towers and sand.

SUSPENDED SENTENCE

Fine bodies of men

THE MAN YOUR unit is sent in to find is Colonel John Konrad, leader of the US Army 33rd Battalion. Konrad insisted on staying put with his troops when the city was evacuated, claiming he would maintain order. But it looks like he's gone rogue, claiming the city for his own and establishing a brutally violent regime. Since taking over Dubai, Colonel Konrad has redecorated, stringing US soldiers up from as many of the city's lampposts as he can. He's made sure the main routes into the city are particularly well decorated just so that you know if you cross the boundary, you'll be next.



● These giraffes are stuffed and on display in a museum. There are no wild giraffes in Dubai.

UPDATE



RELEASE DATE: TBA 2011

Spec Ops: The Line

There is no morality in war



Recently we've been sensing something of a backlash against *Call Of Duty*, not just from fans, but developers, too. It's not that they've been jealously bad-mouthing Activision's FPS behemoth, just that an increasing number of them seem to be making a point of doing military shooters that are, in certain respects, self-consciously different to what *COD* has become. It's not usually mentioned by name, sometimes going under the pseudonym 'other recent shooters', but even if no allusions are made to it at all, it's just an elephant in the room when some games are being presented to you for the first time. You hear a list of all the things this newly announced game *is not*, and it often sounds a lot like a list of all the things *Call Of Duty* is.

Spec Ops is one of those games. On the face of it, the rogue US army officer who's secretly assembled his own private army is deeply reminiscent of *Modern Warfare 2*. But where *Modern Warfare 2* makes a few wild, clumsy stabs and some sort of meaningful commentary on war before embarking on a crass, sensational rollercoaster ride of death and explosions, *Spec Ops* attempts to treat the morality of war with more care and subtlety.

The moral choices you make won't be as clear-cut, as out of context or as nonsensical as, 'Shoot all the civilians in the airport? Or, 'plod along doing nothing for a bit?' and the action won't halt in order to flag up your choice in button-prompt form. In fact, you might not notice you're making a meaningful moral choice at all. But spot them or not, there will be situations where morality is an issue and your actions will have a knock-on effect on events further

down the line, or *The Line*, if you will. Yager claims that there won't be an obvious right or wrong course of action in most of these scenarios, as is the case in real-life war, of course. For example, if you come across troops brutally interrogating what appear to be civilian prisoners, your compassion might tell you to intervene. But doing so might put your squad at risk or compromise your mission priorities in some other way. But then the prisoners might be useful in some way. But what if they're not as innocent as they seem? There are a lot of ifs and buts, and Yager wants your decisions to be made by a combination of heart and head, not just for the pursuit of a specific outcome. Here's hoping for

an engaging script and convincing characters then.

The story of the game is that Dubai has been buried by a huge sandstorm and this will have a huge impact on both the aesthetic and the gameplay of *Spec Ops*. Dubai's skyline is symbolic of wealth, power and capitalism. The city exists as a magnet for super-rich businesses in the

Spec Ops attempts to treat the morality of war with care

hope that this will keep its economy going once the emirate of Dubai's oil reserves have run dry. There's something eerie about seeing such an opulent environment covered in sand and totally abandoned.

Most of Dubai's 1.3 million inhabitants have been evacuated, leaving only the 33rd US Army Battalion, a few gangs of bandits and scavengers, and a handful of civilians who didn't manage to get out. Your mission, as the leader of a Delta Force unit, is to enter the city and find a rogue US army colonel. We suspect it's not going to be a straightforward job.

Yager Development is developing **Spec Ops: The Line**. Check the website for more details: www.yager.de



Your character will be voiced by Nolan 'Nathan Drake and just about everyone else' North.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Forces you to make snap decisions in morally ambiguous situations.
- Has a setting that is quite unlike any other game currently out there.
- Graphic, but seemingly not gratuitous, scenes of violence.
- Your squad isn't annoyingly dependent on you, which is refreshing.

READ ME

Third-person shooter set in the city of Dubai after a catastrophic sandstorm. Draws influence from *BioShock* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart Of Darkness*.

PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: 19 NOVEMBER

Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood

Even playing alone, you're still with friends



We've had a look at the new multiplayer elements of *Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood* over the last few months. But now it's time to talk about single-player and what exactly that can bring to the table that we haven't seen before. Well, very little, to be honest. From our hands-on time with the game it's very clear this is the same game again, just with a few

settlement from the attackers and making sure the innocent civilians can be evacuated safely. This means riding, fighting and cannoning your way through the invading armies of Cesare Borgia, trying to slow them down just enough for everyone to escape in one piece. It's a hectic re-introduction to combat, as well as a bit of destructive fun as you fire from defensive positions at the

Brotherhood gets you into the action a lot quicker than *Assassin's Creed II* did

tweaks and additions here and there to add more to the experience.

Brotherhood picks up where *ACII* left off, and players are reintroduced to the free-running mechanics and other controls in a series of simple missions. We could call them tutorial missions if we were feeling snarky, so we will: they're tutorial missions. Fortunately, they don't last very long, and not long after the returning Ezio has had his way with a lady does the assassin's stronghold of Monteriggioni come under a massive attack. It's here where things start to get a bit more interesting, as you are thrust into the role of defending the

approaching enemy. It certainly gets you into the action a lot quicker than *Assassin's Creed II* did.

From there we begin to inhabit more familiar territory, as Ezio and some of his compatriots escape to Rome. There we were able to take on the usual running, climbing, assassinations and side missions that we've come to know and love since last year's game.

Brotherhood will be instantly familiar to anyone who played *ACII*, and with good cause: there's very little to separate it from the last game. Controls are the same, it looks the same and it plays the same. There are

the obvious additions in the shape of your guild and how you manage and upgrade assassins, but these seem to bring more a collection of menus to the game than a real feeling of this being something new.

Nevertheless, let's explain how Ezio's partners in killing-people-silently-from-the-shadows work. As the story progresses the player gets the ability to recruit more and more outside help. These recruited assassins can be sent on missions all around the world in order to bring in money and experience for the individuals in question – it's a system similar to that in *Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker*, where troops were sent out in similar circumstances. The more XP each guild member earns, the better they get at their tasks – and you can choose to upgrade their stats yourself (or just set it to auto), meaning they can become stronger in the attack or more resistant to damage. It's an interesting management aspect added to the main game but – as we said – all it does is add a few menus to the game for you to navigate through.

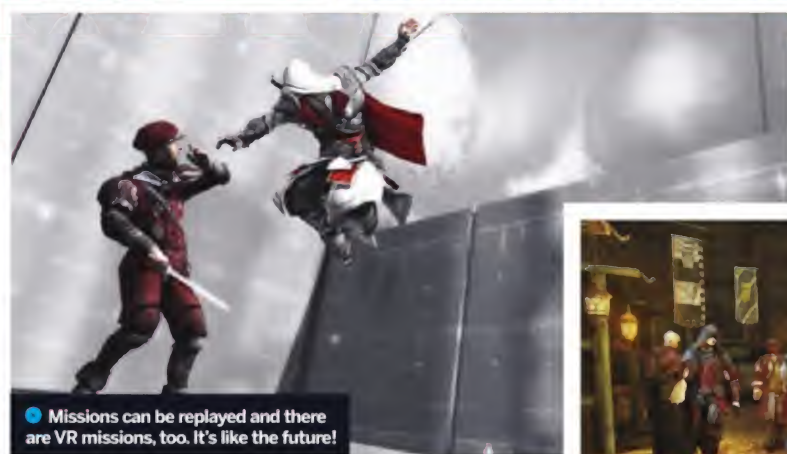
When it comes to getting your team-mates involved in the day-to-day life of Ezio, things are a bit

different. Targeting an enemy leads to a button prompt popping up – tap **L1** and members of your guild will appear from the rooftops, raining down death on those you've targeted and fighting by your side. Basically, it's a special power button. There may be more options in the full game, or more scope to use the ability in a strategic fashion, but from what we saw it's not much more than a 'call allies' button.

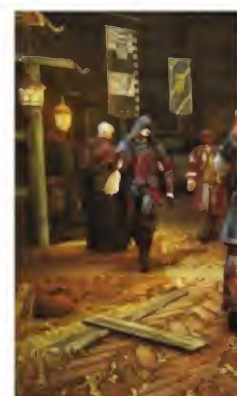
It is fun, if not surprisingly familiar, but there were moments in our time with the game it became a little frustrating. Namely when seeing issues from *ACII* rearing their heads again. Hopefully they'll be ironed out before release.

Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood could go one of two ways right now. Either it could be received as a bit half-baked, as a bit cynical and as not bringing enough new features to really make it stand out from or above its forebear. Or it could be that the game – when multiplayer is taken into account – will redefine the *Assassin's Creed* experience, affecting how the rest of the series pans out and its focus on the lone, stealthy individual. We're finding it hard to think where else opinions will fall on this one, but we're obviously rooting for the latter – and you'll be able to find out in our review, which should be in next month's issue, all going well.

Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood is being developed by Ubisoft Montreal. Check out <http://assassinscreed.uk.ubi.com> for more details.



● Missions can be replayed and there are VR missions, too. It's like the future!



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- If you wanted more from *Assassin's Creed II*, you're in luck.
- Rome is a rather good-looking setting and quite massive, too.
- Combat has been tweaked to make it more exciting. Apparently.
- The multiplayer mode gives everything a nice new sheen.

READ ME

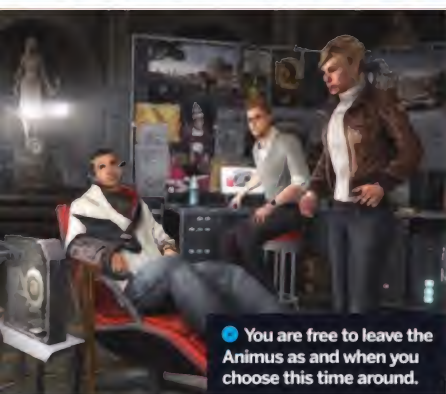
Leonardo da Vinci "invented" (conceptualised) a lot of things in his life, including a helicopter and a tank. His contribution to *Brotherhood*? A parachute. Hmm.



• Doctor Boo!



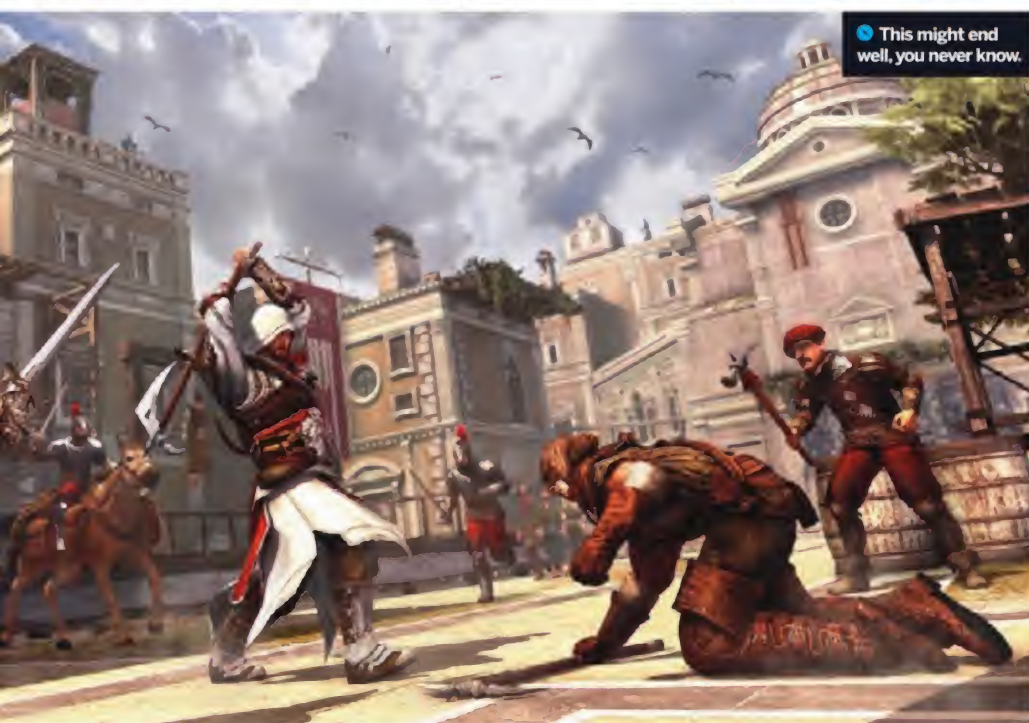
• Firearms are far more prevalent this time around.



• You are free to leave the Animus as and when you choose this time around.



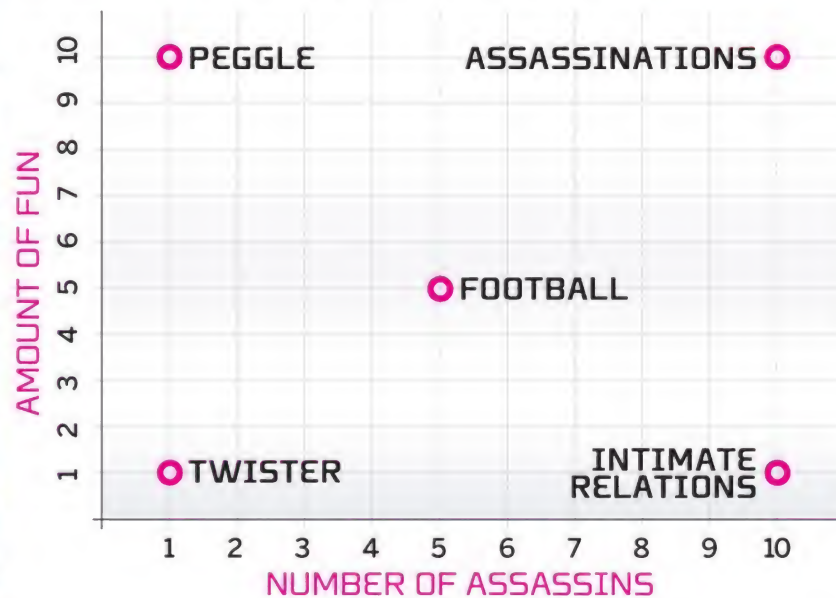
• What the hell is this? Some kind of brotherhood? Oh...



• This might end well, you never know.

FUN WITH GRAPHS

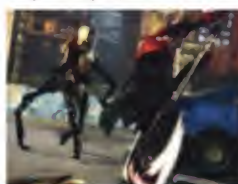
An assassin's guild is better with more assassins, true. But is everything better with more assassins? We did science to check this out...



PREVIEW

SWORD OFF

Scything up the situation



THERE'S BEEN A distinct lack of giant, phallic swords in everything we've seen of *DmC* so far. Dante attacks using his fists and pistols and by stubbing cigarettes out on his foes' heads, but there's no sword to be seen. Instead there's what appears to be a scythe not unlike that wielded by the Dante from *Dante's Inferno*.

URBAN REDEVELOPMENT

Welcome to Limbo City



LIMBO CITY IS the setting for the game, but we don't know a great deal about it yet. The name would imply that it's somewhere between Heaven and Hell and the architecture of this place is suitably mixed. Futuristic skyscrapers rub buttresses with grand medieval buildings and disused industrial shells.

PISTOL WHIPPER-SNAPPER

These shoes were made for walking (only)



WE'RE SURE THERE'LL be those who'll decry Capcom for not making the same games according to the same formulae forever and ever, but never mind them. As a general rule, change is good. And when you stand *Devil May Cry 4* next to (arguably its natural successor) *Bayonetta*, it does look pretty stale. Even the idea of only having pistols in both hands seems a bit weird now.



SOLITARY MAN

Does Dante have an image problem?

IT'S NOT THE change of developer that's caused a stir, it's the new Dante. Some have complained he looks like an emo hipster but c'mon, he's always been a bit Ville Valo (frontman of 'love metal' band, HIM) at heart. Now he just looks like him as well. The one thing we're not sure about: is that bruising around his eyes? Or make-up? We're guessing a bit of both.

RELEASE DATE: TBA 2011

DmC: Devil May Cry

It's still Dante, in Theory



Well, this is a bold and unexpected move. It had been rumoured that Ninja Theory might be handling the next *Devil May Cry* game, but the announcement at TGS still came as something of a surprise. We're still having trouble seeing how it's going to work, but that doesn't necessarily mean it won't. After all, if Konami successfully outsourced development of the latest *Castlevania* title to a small European developer, then there's no reason why Capcom can't do the same.

We don't mean 'small' as a slur to Ninja Theory, by the way. We found a lot to like in both *Heavenly Sword* and *Enslaved*, but neither is as good or as high-profile as *Devil May Cry*. The Cambridge-based studio will

previous games – a *Devil May Cry* without giant nymphoid toads, rocket-launching gyropods, flesh-coloured knickers and the like is just unimaginable – but we can see Ninja Theory smoothing down the crude edges of this kind of stuff and delivering it with a tad more style and sophistication. Yeah, we won't be losing any sleep over that.

But at the core of *Devil May Cry's* appeal is its combat. It's a Capcom game with Capcom combat. The kind of combat so refined, so finely balanced, so deep and so spectacular that only Capcom and PlatinumGames (which was founded by ex-Capcom employees) can really do it. Ninja Theory certainly hasn't proven its mettle in combat, so this is the area we

hope Capcom will be collaborating most closely on. The deal between Capcom and Ninja Theory, we're assured, is more than

Ninja Theory has proven itself when it comes to graphics, art, sound, cinematics and storytelling

need to push itself to the next level if *DmC* is to be deemed worthy of carrying the *Devil May Cry* name by the series' hardcore following. It's a tough challenge, but there's no reason it can't happen.

There's no doubt that the game's production values will be in safe hands. Ninja Theory certainly *has* proven itself when it comes to graphics, art, sound, cinematics and storytelling. In fact, we can well imagine there'll be significant improvements over *Devil May Cry 4* in this area. We wouldn't want the series to turn its back on the surreal silliness of

just a developer-publisher relationship. It's a development partnership whereby key Capcom staff will be working directly on the game, including *Devil May Cry* stalwart Hideaki Itsuno. As far as we can tell it sounds like a similar set up to that between MercurySteam and Kojima Productions on *Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow*, and that worked out pretty well in the end. Just one thing: please, Mr Itsuno, don't let it out the door 'til the combat can melt faces. Thanks.

DmC: Devil May Cry is being developed by Ninja Theory. Check the website for more details: www.ninjatheory.com

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Don't worry, it's still *Devil May Cry*. Just about.
- Dante's had a haircut. Maybe now he'll be able to get a proper job.
- It's upsetting mouthy internet people. Good.
- Brings a bit of freshness to an ageing series.

READ ME

The *Devil May Cry* series gets farmed out to the UK's very own Ninja Theory, of *Heavenly Sword* and *Enslaved* fame.

PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: TBA 2011

Alice: Madness Returns

She's back. Alice is onto another twisted adventure in Wonderland

 American McGee has a lot of guts digging up a ten-year-old PC series that saw only one game and making a sequel for the modern market. Perhaps the odd combination of platforming and combat that made *Alice* such a cult favourite ten years ago will make *Alice: Madness Returns* for the PlayStation 3 a hit in this mash-up age of genre remixing.

Modern PlayStation users may not have heard of American McGee's *Alice*, a Quake engine-powered platformer/action game hybrid that developed a strong base of vocal fans and, according to McGee, still sells an impressive number of copies each year for a decade-old game. However, *Madness Returns* is aiming to please both fans of the original and newcomers.





We were on hand in Tokyo when McGee debuted his hands-off demo of the game. We watched Alice jump and platform her way around the Mad Hatter's domain and the Veil of Tears, cutting any enemy that got in her way with her Vorpal blade.

The platforming elements from the original seem to have survived to the present day intact, but the combat has been spruced up to suit modern tastes. Playing like a twisted version of *Zelda* or *Okami*, each enemy can only be taken down by following a specific strategy. What's more, each stage of the game will be filled with new baddies. As soon as you've had your fill of the monsters in the realm of the Mad Hatter, you'll be on to face a new set in a different level and you won't see any of the Hatter's minions for the rest of the game.

Modern technology has allowed McGee and his team to make the art even more grotesque and unnerving, and the game looks great even in its current pre-alpha state. At its core *Alice: Madness Returns* looks like it may very well live up to the legacy of its predecessor and ease new fans into American McGee's odd take on Wonderland.

American McGee's Shanghai based Spicy Horse Studios is the team behind *Alice: Madness Returns*. Check out www.ea.com/alice for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

-  Unique combat and platforming made the first *Alice* a critic's darling.
-  *Madness Returns* resurrects a series that fans had feared dead and buried.
-  Alice will have to use abilities such as shrinking enemies to progress.
-  The twisted art style from the first game returns in sickening HD detail.

READ ME

After the murder of her parents, Alice must delve into her psyche (represented by Wonderland) in an attempt to save herself.

IN-DEPTH



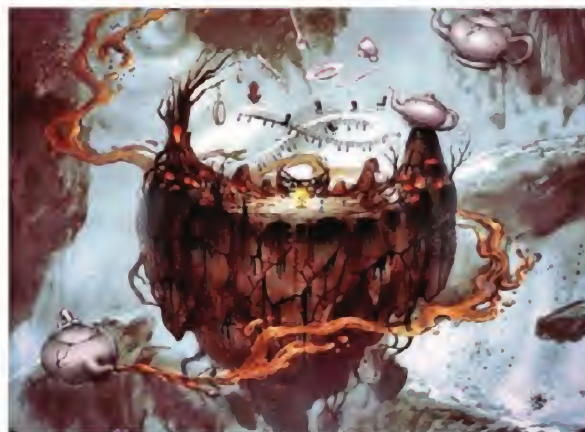
● Players will return to environments from the previous game and will be able to see how Alice's actions then changed Wonderland.



● Alice will be able to smite her enemies dead snicker-snack with her Vorpal blade.



● Alice will have to irritate the eyes of these teapots with her pepper shaker before she can take them out.



BACKING VOCALS

Fan faves from the original return nearly a decade later

WHILE THE GRAPHICS and engine may be new for *Madness Returns*, the memorable voice cast from the original has been completely reassembled. During our demo, we were particularly struck by the voice of the Cheshire cat, which matched his emaciated look and creepy smile. Other returning cast members include the Mad Hatter and Alice herself.

There's no denying it looks *Dead Space-y*.

DEV Q&A



Necromorphs rely on overwhelming numbers and surprise.



Necromorphs



General Apathy

You too can have your face smashed in by your fellow players!

DEAD SPACE FACE TO FACE

Alone, together – you're just going to die

MULTIPLAYER FOR *Dead Space 2* is an addition we didn't really expect after the first game. We're confident it won't take too much focus away from the great-looking single-player game and will instead offer a fine sideshow to the main attraction. Also you can smash your friends' faces off.



Sgt. Alejandro

Mr. Murphy

RELEASE DATE: 28 JANUARY 2011

Dead Space 2

We chat with Visceral's Steve Papoutsis about *Dead Space 2*'s multiplayer



How many modes are there and what are they?

Dead Space multiplayer is one mode, but it also features five objective-based maps that each have a different objective.

the other Necromorphs – to give you that real, authentic *Dead Space* flavour.

Where did the spark for multiplayer come from?

Well, I was looking in this giant pool of water, and this vision came to me that said 'you should do it' – nah, I'm kidding [laughs]. Actually, the whole motivation behind it really was just player-focused. When we put out *Dead Space* it was terrific, all the support we got from the community, and the number one requested feature was multiplayer. So that was the motivator, to put that in for the people who supported the game... The next step was 'how do we figure out and create a compelling multiplayer offering that could only take place in a *Dead Space* game?' That's where we came up with the ideas of this co-op/competitive mode where when you're on a team together you want to be co-operating and you want to be competing against the other side. That, and the fact that we're the only game where you can strategically dismember your friends made a lot of sense for us.

What are the five objectives?

The ones we've talked about are Titan Mines, where you're trying to assemble a shock mine as the human security force, and as the Necromorphs you're trying to stop the humans from doing so by dismembering the shit out of them [laughs]. Escape is a map where you're trying to ready and launch escape pods to evacuate The Sprawl. Again, the Necromorphs are trying to dismember the shit out of the humans.

Is it always four-on-four? Or can you play with less players, or AI bots making up numbers?

You can play with as few as two-on-two humans and on the AI side, since the Necromorphs are all about overwhelming in numbers, in a traditional map of four-on-four there will be four human security forces, four player-controlled Necromorphs and then five AI Necromorphs to help out

Dead Space 2 is being developed by Visceral Games. Check out www.deadspacegame.com for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Keeping the scares while throwing in multiple players should be fun.
- Play as either side, so you can be a disgusting thing as well as a Necromorph (ho ho).

- Narrative elements are present in the online game, adding consistency.
- You don't have to play it online if you're a purist who hates the idea.

READ ME

It's true that in space no one can hear you scream, but when you bring headsets to multiplayer then all of your friends can hear you yelp.



● "Heeeeeeere's Adam!"

RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY 2011

Deus Ex: Human Revolution

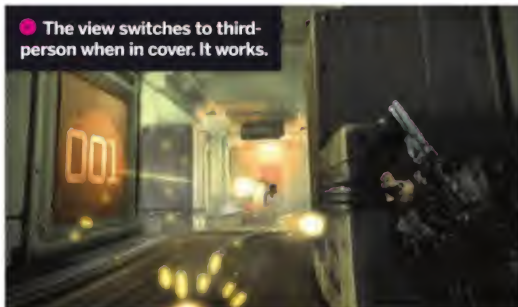
It may be a revolution, but will it be a revelation?



● You probably want to avoid the red things. And the robots.



● The view switches to third-person when in cover. It works.



PS3 We've still got a bit of a mental wall stopping us from going all-out with our enthusiasm for this new entry to the *Deus Ex* series. As we've mentioned many times before, the first game is one of the best things ever made (less so on its PS2 conversion, but the point stands) and so it's hard for us to accept that – after the disappointment of the second game – it will be up to scratch. But it just seems that Eidos Montreal really won't let us rest on our inherent prejudices, and it is doing everything in its power to show us that *Human Revolution* will, in fact, be really rather good.

So keen is the developer to show us that its take on the *Deus Ex* universe offers genuine choice in how to approach situations that we were walked through the same situation three times, in three different fashions. Adam Jensen – all-round super-augmented bloke – had to infiltrate a police station to retrieve a microchip, possibly containing sensitive information, from what can only be described as 'a dead bloke in the morgue'.

One method of approach is to simply walk up to the front desk and try to talk your way in. Gauging the emotions and reactions of those you converse with will both be an

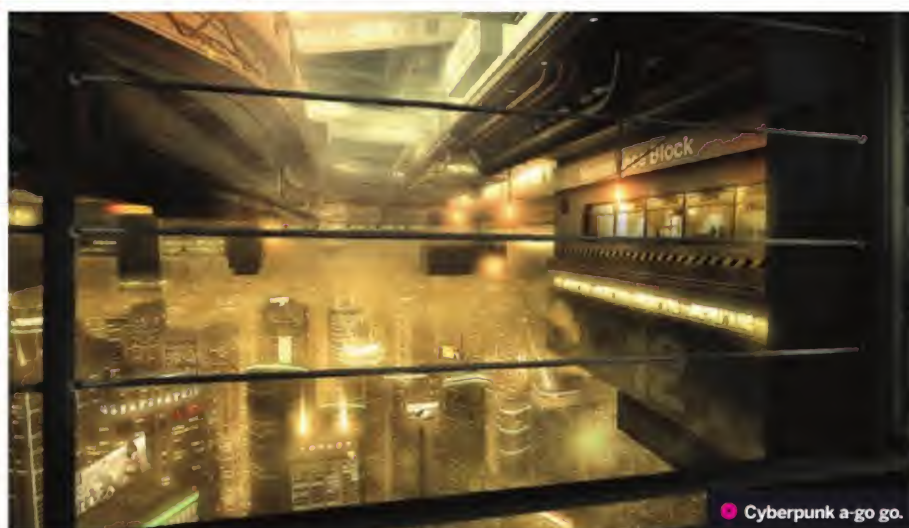
augmentable power in the game as well as something you'll need to master if you want to succeed. Using this method, that is. Fortunately, this time around Jensen found out he had something in common with the fed on the front desk, and by cleverly worming his way into the officer's good books he was soon allowed free and full access to the morgue. Job done.

But what about those of you who like shooting people, like cops? Well, you are also catered for, you *Daily Mail*-baiting fools. A stand-up gunfight will see you dying soon enough, so clever use of cover is necessary to progress. No cover

UPDATE



Ignore the guns, it's not a straight-up shooter.



Cyberpunk a-go go.



around? Bring your own, like the handy photocopier we were shown being used as a mobile bullet shield.

But what about if you hate talking to people and fear conflict? Just sneak. The classic, confined crawl spaces of the air vents make a return for *Human Revolution*, bringing us back to the glory days of hiding for ages while hunched over. Ah, the (augmented) bad backs. Avoiding the patrol routes of guards, making sure you don't stray into their line of sight, making sure you aren't heard – they're all things we've seen in other games before. But augmentations offering things like invisibility mix up a familiar format somewhat, and while the guards did sometimes appear

It looks promising and it's good to see Eidos Montreal pushing the fact that it does pay attention to the *Deus Ex* of old

to be a bit deaf it was still no less thrilling to successfully sneak up and crack some skulls. Another element returning from previous games is hacking, but this time it's handled in mini-game form – something sure to annoy as many as it enthralls. We thought it looked quite interesting, though, with the cyber cat-and-mouse throwing up some panicked, yet careful, puzzle-navigating.

It's another brief look and we still haven't been able to get our hands on the game for any reasonable

amount of time, so we're still going to hold back on any early judgements. As it stands, things certainly look promising and it's good to see Eidos Montreal pushing the fact that it does pay attention to the *Deus Ex* of old, that this is very much a game from that series. Are we optimistic? Maybe. Are we scared of being let-down? Possibly. Do we have any right to be? Only the future will tell.

Deus Ex: Human Revolution is being developed by Eidos Montreal. Check out www.deusex.com for more details.

THE FOUR PILLARS

Though there are more than four approaches

THE DIFFERENT APPROACHES to obstacles in *Human Revolution* haven't come about by accident – they are a clearly defined 'four pillars' the developer has set out to hit. Combat, steal, hacking and social are the main approaches that make up the experience and let players tackle situations in the many different ways they can. We're glad to see this approach, as it keeps the spirit of the series alive, though, we do have some issues. Namely, this regimented nature to a freeform method could prove counterintuitive in the finished game. Hopefully not, though.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- If you like to sneak, you can approach things stealthily if you want.
- If you like to shoot, you can approach things guns-first if you want.
- If you like to get stuck in, you can approach things directly if you want.
- Or, you can not bother approaching things at all if you want.

READ ME

Warren Spector, the creator of the original *Deus Ex* game, has nothing to do with this game. He is instead focused on the Wii-only *Epic Mickey*.



RELEASE DATE: TBA 2011

● Is this really the end for *Yakuza*?



● The main villain of the game is a mysterious ultra-fast and intelligent zombie. Who is he?



● It seems that characters long-thought dead and buried may make a return for what could be the final *Yakuza* game.

Yakuza: Of The End

Yakuza meets Resident Evil

PS3

The *Yakuza* series gets more and more absurd with each iteration. As we mentioned in our import review of *Yakuza 4* recently, the series' attempt to cling to realism while giving players an over-the-top, action-packed story is detrimental. Sega seemingly has realised it can't have both, and it has decided to jettison the gritty realism of the series for zombies in *Yakuza: Of The End*.

We managed to snag a seat at Sega's secretive Tokyo Game Show display and check it out. The trailer opens up on Shun Akiyama, the money lender with a heart of gold from *Yakuza 4*, in Kamurocho (the setting for most of the games in the series). Suddenly, a man is kicked out a window, picks himself off the ground and starts biting passers-by. The outbreak has begun.

Later in the trailer, Shun and two other playable characters, Ryuji Goda (the main bad guy of *Yakuza 2*) and Goro Majima (a series regular) find themselves trapped when the Japanese government seals off Kamurocho to stop the zombie outbreak.

The trailer then cuts to Haruka Sawamura (schoolgirl and constant damsel in distress from the previous games) tied up and presumably in

danger. Her would-be kidnapper puts a phone to her ear and she screams, "Kamurocho is broken!" It turns out that the man on the other end of the phone is series protagonist Kazuma Kiryu, who must sneak into quarantined Kamurocho to save Haruka.

The trailer switched from story focus onto gameplay modes. The trademark mini-games of the series will make a return, along with the hostess club management that was removed from the Western version of *Yakuza 3* (but will be left intact for this instalment).

Despite the brawling nature of previous *Yakuza* games, shooting and gunplay feature majorly in *Of The End*. Each playable character has their own speciality. Shun is great with pistols, Kazuma with sniper rifles and Goda has a Gatling gun for an arm. The story eventually unites the four characters as they attempt to save Kamurocho and the world from zombies, giant monsters and even pro-zombie activists.

As *Yakuza 4* hasn't seen a Western release yet, fans will have to wait before they get to play *Yakuza: Of The End*.

Yakuza: Of The End is being developed by Sega and series mastermind Toshihiro Nagoshi. Check the website for more (mostly Japanese) details: <http://ryu-ga-gotoku.com>

AI CO-OP

Gang up on the undead **YOU'LL BE ABLE** to team up with AI partners as you shoot your way through the waves of zombies, demons and giant monsters. During our preview we even saw a few scenes of the player character battling the undead with shotgun-wielding hostesses dressed to the nines. Unfortunately, it seems your partners will be restricted to the computer-controlled variety. No real co-op here.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Sega has jettisoned any pretence of realistic drama in favour of zombies.
- Despite the post-apocalyptic setting, the trademark mini-games will make a return.
- You will be able to play as all four of *Yakuza* fans' favourite characters.
- Zombies and Japanese gangsters, what else could you possibly want?

READ ME

Zombies have invaded Tokyo and only the *Yakuza* series' main protagonist, Kazuma Kiryu, and his three less-than-noble companions can save the world.



By teaming Teotl and Tepeu together you can do some devastating attacks.



Teotl can learn a whole bunch of very useful abilities such as breathing out ice.



You need to feed Teotl fruits to keep him energised ready for the next battle.



THE NAME GAME

A reversal of title fortunes

A CURIOUS DECISION from Game Republic is that the Majin himself has a name, Teotl, but that the thief and player character doesn't. The name Tepeu is given to him by Teotl. Usually the monster is given a name by the hero. Could this be a clue as to a darker turn the game will take later or just another way to bring man and beast closer together? Time, we hope, will tell.

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom

A friend in need is a friend indeed



Namco Bandai's monster and thief adventure is a game we've been keeping an eye on for quite some time now. While it draws comparisons with Team Ico's upcoming *The Last Guardian* thanks to its partnership between player and monster and the original *Ico* thanks to its game world, that's no bad thing. But thankfully *Majin* is no copycat and has plenty of its own charm.

For starters, how you work with the Majin is very direct, issuing instructions to him so he knows which enemies to attack and what doors to open. He can also interact with devices such as a catapult that can fling Tepeu to high vantage points. All of these commands are handled by holding down **R2**,

pointing at what you want to interact with and then selecting an action from the menu. Simple and effective.

But the mechanics of the game are functional. The fun comes from the Majin, named Teotl, and Tepeu the thief working together. Teotl has a goofy affability that makes him a joy to spend time with. Every enemy defeated or puzzle solved results in bouncy celebration. His broken language and cumbersome manner give him the feel of a child that really enjoys smashing things and eating.

Of course you have direct control over Tepeu and he's nice and simple to work with. As well as being able to talk to animals Tepeu has some natural thief-like sneaking abilities, but his combat is useless without Teotl's help. He cannot defeat the

oilily creatures infesting the world alone and needs the Majin to knock them down first. It's only by working together that the two of them can escape together and defeat the evil presence in the world.

There's much more yet unseen from *Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom* and big boss battles are teased in the early stages of the game. We also know that the puzzle solving becomes more complex later on with Teotl spitting out water and flame as he becomes more powerful. How much it has been influenced by Team Ico seems rather irrelevant then, as this could well be a very solid game all on its own.

Game Republic is at the helm on *Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom*. Visit <http://bit.ly/cUscWD> for more info.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Very fun characters with some well-thought-out combo actions between them.
- Genuinely challenging puzzles that will have you thinking for some time.

- A magical world full of interesting details for you to enjoy.
- Significantly better than *Folklore* or *Genji*, thank goodness.

READ ME

Majin started production long before *The Last Guardian* was announced so any similarities are merely coincidental.

PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: SPRING 2011

Marvel Vs Capcom 3: Fate Of Two Worlds

We're still waiting on the Barry Burton announcement

PS3

It looks like a comic.
What's up with that?

That is the intention.

Capcom wants this to be a living comic book and – from what we've seen – it's living up to that. Smooth animations back up the fact that it's really bloody pretty.

But graphics aren't everything...

True, but it helps when it does look as nice as this.

Like how?

Well, little visual effects like how the 'pages' turn after certain attacks, or how the screens you are presented with when victorious (or when you've lost, of course) are in comic book-style panels. It's the little touches that make the big differences in the end, and it certainly helps *Marvel Vs Capcom 3* differentiate itself from Capcom's other fighting franchise.

So what's new since the last time you told me about the game?

Well, we've seen the addition of a couple of characters – the rather obvious Spider-Man, of *Spider-Man* fame, and the rather less-obvious Albert Wesker, of *Resident Evil* fame.

So what do they do then?

Spidey is as you'd expect, and similar to how he was in previous MVC games. He swings around a lot and is agile, quick and annoying. Wesker is a bit of a mystery, but judging by his super-strength and other ridiculous abilities in recent *Resi* games he's sure to have some stupid super moves.

Stupid in the good way?

We hope so. We also hope he has more wonderful voice acting.

But how does it actually play? Tell us about that.

Okay, calm down. It's interesting – the game is obviously still aimed at the fighting game hardcore, but at the same time caters for those not really used to brawlers.

Explain how...

We're getting to that. Controls are no longer punches and kicks, instead replaced by three attack buttons and a button to launch your opponent upwards to kick off an air combo. It might leave some of the purists a bit miffed, truth be told.

But it might... not?

Also true. The simplification means the game is opened up to far more players than ever before, but at the same time fighting game veterans are still going to be able to throw down some sweet beatings.

Marvel Vs Capcom 3 is being developed by Capcom. Check out www.marvelvscapcom3.com for more details.



IT'S ALL GOOD

But what could actually go wrong?

WE'VE BEEN OVERWHELMINGLY positive in our coverage of MVC 3 so far, so let's temper it with some hypotheses on what *could* go wrong. It could be over-simplified, leaving us with style over substance, there could be far too many characters for them to be true individuals and... hmm... nope. We're struggling.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's looking incredibly pretty, all comic bookified as it is.
- It's much easier for newcomers to get involved than previous games.
- Don't worry die-hard fans, it's still a great game for enthusiasts, too.
- Wesker means *Resident Evil* which means more chance of Barry.

READ ME

Our favourite team on MVC 2 was Spider-Man, Ryu and Cable. Mainly because their combined super combo had a ridiculous hit count.

THE LATEST ON... TBC-mania: now with something for everyone



BEYOND GOOD & EVIL HD

Publisher Ubisoft Developer Ubisoft
ETA TBC 2011 Format PS3

THIS IS THE kind of news we can take in lieu of anything coming out about a sequel to Michel Ancel's fantastic adventure game of seven years ago. Tartyed-up graphics, remastered sound and downloadable through PSN – this is very, very good news indeed and will likely be a day one purchase.



NEVERDEAD

Publisher Rebellion Developments Developer Konami
ETA TBC 2011 Format PS3

HAVE YOU EVER hoped for a game where the enemy can dismember you, then use your now unattached arm (with gun still in hand) to shoot at you? Have you ever then wanted to take down this enemy with your remaining arm/body parts, before reclaiming and reattaching said dismembered arm? Welcome to *NeverDead*.



CATHERINE

Publisher Atlus Developer Atlus
ETA TBC 2011 Format PSP

A 32-YEAR-OLD salaryman meets a 22-year-old girl. They hook up, he is soon plagued with nightmares of unending staircases, from which he can only awake by getting to the top of the stairs. It's made by some of the devs involved with *Persona 4* and has been described as 'erotic' and 'adult-oriented'. Nice.



BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY 2 VIETNAM

Publisher EA Developer DICE
ETA Winter Format PS3

THIS DOWNLOADABLE EXPANSION for *Bad Company 2* set during the Vietnam War draws ever closer to release. Era-appropriate weaponry, vehicles and enemies make this more than just a simple map pack. Hopefully with more great multiplayer.



TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT 2

Publisher Namco Bandai Developer Namco
ETA TBC Format TBC

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF the sequel to one of the PS2's launch titles has taken us completely by surprise, truth be told. We don't even know if it's coming to PlayStation, but it would be a fairly safe assumption. Expect more double-team action and a more involving tag mechanic, basically.



NI NO KUNI

Publisher TBC Developer Level-5/Studio Ghibli
ETA TBC 2011 Format PS3

A FANTASY RPG following a young boy capable of magic and his frighteningly cute accomplices as they quest to do some things we're not quite sure of yet. This is being made with Studio Ghibli, meaning we're in little doubt it will be stunning-looking, sickeningly adorable and astonishingly imaginative.



ASURA'S WRATH

Publisher Capcom Developer CyberConnect2
ETA TBC Format PS3

VERY LITTLE IS known about this team-up between the developers of the *.hack* games and a number of the *Naruto* fighting games. We do know it has a batpoo mental trailer and is based around the concept of 'wrath' – something we can obviously relate to quite well at **Play**.



MEGA MAN UNIVERSE

Publisher Capcom Developer Capcom
ETA Spring 2011 Format PS3

A MEGA MAN game bringing together Mega... Men... of old and new, along with a few other chaps, chapettes and robots. As well as *Street Fighter*'s Ryu. Along with the usual *Mega Man* rock-hard gameplay, players will be able to make their own heroes from constituent parts and edit stages.



EL SHADDAI: ASCENSION OF THE METATRON

Publisher Ignition Entertainment Developer Ignition Entertainment
ETA TBC 2011 Format PS3

TWO THINGS CAME to light about *El Shaddai* recently: first, the game has been in development for over three years. Second, it won the 'Future Game Of The Show 2010' from TGS. What does this mean? Well, it's not rushed, and people are looking forward to it.



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PLAY# Reviews

点検

Playing bad games so you don't have to

Including: Gambling away our caps in *Fallout: New Vegas* /// *EA Sports MMA* punches our face off /// We ch-ch-ch-check (it) out *DJ Hero 2*



- 80 *Fallout: New Vegas* PS3
- 84 *Medal Of Honor* PS3
- 88 *EA Sports MMA* PS3
- 90 *Shaun White Skateboarding* PS3
- 91 *NHL 11* PS3
- 92 *DJ Hero 2* PS3
- 93 *Front Mission Evolved* PS3
- 94 *Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland* PS3
- 94 *BlazBlue: Continuum Shift* PS3
- 95 *Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes* PS3
- 96 *Heavy Rain: Move Edition* PS3
- 96 *Racket Sports* PS3
- 97 *Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage* PS3
- 97 *Saw II: Flesh & Blood* PS3
- 98 *FIFA 11* PSP



84 Medal Of Honor PS3
No 'u' in team. Or Honor, apparently



95 Sengoku Basara PS3
Salient samurai silliness



98 FIFA 11 PSP
Again? Oh, it's on PSP

review panel



Ben Biggs

Reviewed: *Atelier Rorona: Alchemist Of Arland*, *Saw II*

This month Biggs decided to travel the world in order to bring about social reforms and fairer working wages for the people of the Earth.

His first, and only, stop was Spain, where he joined in a protest march attended by the Socialist Workers Party, workers unions and the like. During the march he waved flags, chanted slogans (in Spanish, and beginning with "arriba") and tried to bring higher wages to groups of Spaniards less well-off than they'd hope to be. You do realise we're not actually making this up, right? If we did it would be far, far weirder.

currently playing:
Civilization V



Tom Hopkins

Reviewed: *NHL 11*

Tom may have been mixing it up on the ice, but he certainly didn't give an icy reception (DO YOU SEE WHAT WE DID THERE?) to comedian Jason Manford. Especially not after the reasonably funny Manc told a joke about scallywags burning down a dinosaur in Portsmouth. Except, unfortunately, this isn't a complete joke in that it's based on something that happened in real life. We can only assume the residents of Portsmouth feared the dino was an omen for the town and would only bring with it bad tidings. Either that or they hated *Jurassic Park*, which is frankly impossible.

currently playing:
God Of War III



Chris McMahon

Reviewed: *DJ Hero 2*

Obviously encouraged by his burgeoning career as a professional DJ (in a videogame), McMahon decided this would be his month to really get involved in the world of guns and bling. Unfortunately, he couldn't afford the bling, so instead he went and shot some guns in California – for training purposes, of course. During his self-enforced regime Chris hurt his thumb firing a Magnum. McMahon also attended a party where there was a fight, a girl crying, the toilet was broken and he vomited *before* they had even gone out for the night. Guns were not involved, apparently.

currently playing:
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West



Ian Dransfield

Reviewed: *Medal Of Honor*, *EA Sports MMA*, *FME*, *Racket Sports*, *FIFA 11*

Ian recently returned to his adopted homeland of Sweden in order to tickle Greg Goodrich's beard. On the trip he tried to ingratiate himself with the locals by imitating the Swedish Chef from *The Muppet Show*. Needless to say, he was swiftly ejected from the country and has been asked – in the polite-but-cold fashion of the Swedes – to never come back again. Ian has taken this as a challenge, and will be doing everything in his power to return to the country – by legal means or not. That's right: he might fly Ryanair.

currently playing:
Alpha Protocol. Still

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Fallout: New Vegas

Fallout... Fallout sometimes changes



It's not an expansion to *Fallout 3*. It's not a sequel to *Fallout 3*. And it's not really quite as good as *Fallout 3*. So what exactly is *Fallout: New Vegas*? It's a full, standalone game of approximately the same size as *Fallout 3*, which uses the same engine and a lot of the same technical nuts and bolts. It does introduce some ideas of its own to the *Fallout* formula, but at the same time it isn't a completely new evolution of the *Fallout* experience. That's why it's not called *Fallout 4*.

So what are the new features here? And why, if it's got all this new stuff, is it not as good as *Fallout 3*?

Well, the most important addition in *Fallout: New Vegas*, the one that makes it in one major respect *better* than *Fallout 3*, is the quest structure. Where *Fallout 3* used much the same structure used in *Oblivion*, whereby the main quest was a pretty linear string of missions that existed quite separately from the various optional objectives, *Fallout: New Vegas* takes its cue from the original two *Fallout* games. This means there isn't one set, clearly defined path from the beginning to the end, and that there's a lot of deliberate overlap between main and optional quests with events tying in with each other and having a variety of knock-on effects.

It's linear-ish for the first six to seven hours – although you are free to wander off wherever you like within about ten minutes if you fast-track through character creation – but then there's a pivotal point in the game where the main plot gets blown very wide open and both the course and outcome of the story are put very, very much in your hands. At this juncture the game calls an amnesty on any naughtiness you might have got involved in up to that point, resetting any hostility incurred from certain factions back to neutral, then explicitly states that this will not happen again – from now on, everything you do has consequences that could potentially steer the main plot. In some cases it's obvious that your actions will have



DETAILS

Publisher
Bethesda
Developer
Obsidian
Price
£49.99
Players
1
Genre
RPG
Supports
720p, Downloadable
content, DualShock 3,
Dolby Digital 5.1
Age Rating
18
Website
<http://fallout.bethsoft.com>



It's lighter in tone than *Fallout 3*, but we're not exactly talking Disney here.

an impact. For example, working for one of the major factions is bound to put them in the driving seat of the power struggle central to *New Vegas*'s plot – although opportunities to betray them might well arise at a later date – but pretty much any side mission, or even just a bit of dicking about, is likely to make at least one of the minor factions friendlier or more hostile towards you, and every faction relationship has some bearing on the story, as well as on what you may or may not be able to do at a later point in the game.

Overall, this complex, interwoven system is definitely an improvement on *Fallout 3*'s

simpler, more linear approach to storytelling and quest structure. You really feel engaged and empowered, like everything really does revolve around you, but there is a slight downside to it as well. First, you're not really quite as free as *Fallout: New Vegas* makes you think you are. Of course, a sense of

New Vegas is packed with detail and humour, but not as engrossing as we would have liked

freedom in a game is always something of an illusion, and it's to Obsidian's credit that we got a little too caught up in it for our own good. But at the same time, it's disappointing



The Repconn rocket facility plays an important part in the story, although actually it might not...





when you think up a cunning solution to a problem in a quest but it simply doesn't work because you're not doing it in one of the preset ways it was designed to be done, regardless of the perfectly sound logic and reason behind your thinking.

And logic and reason can take a bit of a back seat in the storytelling department as well. With there being so many different paths the story can take, there's a fair chance that the story you end up with won't make *that much* sense. It's not that we found any glaring inconsistencies, plot holes or continuity errors, just that the whole thing lacked cohesion. We were aware of having a wide range of options and aware that our choices would have an impact on the people and places around us, but our own motivation wasn't always very clear and this meant the experience sometimes lacked a sense of purpose or of direction. It doesn't >

STRIP TEASE Four ways to have fun in Vegas



GAMBLING

There are several casinos on The Strip, each of which has pretty similar games to play. They can be useful, but they don't offer anything you haven't seen from in-game gambling before.



PARTYING

Booze has more use in *New Vegas* than in *Fallout 3*, as different types can be used as ingredients in all manner of 'cocktail' recipes. Some are drinks, some are drugs and some are explosives.



DANCING

One of the first sights you'll see when you enter *New Vegas* is a group of, ahem, ladies gyrating outside of Gomorrah, a particularly decadent casino and nightclub. They do more than just dance...



CRIME

Various groups hold positions of power in the city, none of which have got there legally. The law isn't much of an obstacle when working for gangs, it's the rival gangs you need to look out for.



> help that later in the game, we found that one simple decision can set off a whole string of quest completions, activations and failures in one go and this kind of thing, while providing a clear illustration of how much of an impact some of your decisions have, did our heads in a bit and it was perhaps harder than it should have been to keep track of what was actually going on.

Because of the open, free nature of the main quest thread, everyone is going to have very different experiences of it, which in itself is awesome. But it also means that you might have a much better experience of it than we did, or maybe much worse. The potential is definitely there for it to go either way. We'd suggest, though, that a patient, thorough, attentive kind of player will probably get the most out of it because the more stuff you get out there and do, and the more attention

you pay to what you're doing, the more you'll appreciate how smartly put together the quests, factions and plot developments are.

So yeah, the quest structure isn't perfect, but it's a significant improvement on the equivalent in *Fallout 3*. There are other additions, too, like the item-creation

The quest structure isn't perfect, but it's a significant improvement on the equivalent in *Fallout 3*

system, which dramatically expands on the workbench feature of *Fallout 3*. It's cool that it makes everything you find potentially useful in some way, but it's too cumbersome and fiddly to add much to the overall fun factor. That said, item creation does tie-in somewhat with the greatly increased range of available



The costumes of Caesar's Legion troops signify their rank. These guys are pretty tough ones.



weapons and weapon customisation options, which adds a layer of strategy to combat and enhances the makeshift feel and scavenging nature of the game.

Then there's the companion command wheel, which is pretty handy, although the game has wider problems when it comes to its handling of non-playable characters generally – as in *Fallout 3*, more so perhaps, they're dumb and frequently get lost and stuck for no good reason. And this is part of a wider problem with *New Vegas* – it simply isn't anywhere near as polished as *Fallout 3*. Sure, *Fallout 3* had its glitches and quirks and *New Vegas's* are of a similar nature, but there are so many more of them. Plus the frame rate is choppy, there's more pop-up and it generally doesn't look as good. It's the same engine, but it looks like the settings have been turned down a notch. This technical sloppiness is compensated for, and made more understandable, by the vast scope of the game, but it's hard to forgive when *Fallout: New Vegas* is struggling more than its predecessor.

Another area in which *New Vegas* fails to come even close to *Fallout 3* is



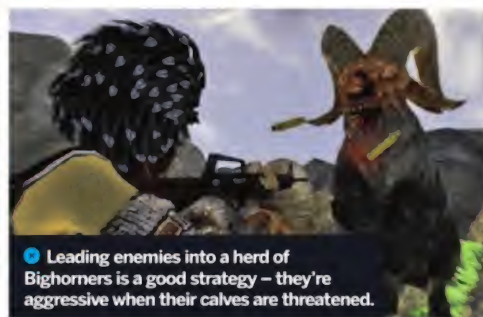
Geckos are a staple enemy in *New Vegas*, as they were in *Fallout 2*.



Previously...
in Play



PREVIEWED Issue 193
"If we said... [Speech] We don't want more of a game we gave 97%... we'd be lying."



• Leading enemies into a herd of Bighorns is a good strategy – they're aggressive when their calves are threatened.



• New Vegas has a sort of in-game Trophy system whereby you earn bonus perks by meeting certain targets.

in its atmosphere. This is a very different game world to the Capital Wasteland. It's a cartoonish and quirky patchwork of caricatures, which is perfectly likeable and entertaining in its own right, but compared to the bleak, darkly comic yet strangely believable post-apocalyptic picture painted by *Fallout 3* it feels quite immature and dated. This might all be taking place in a less devastated part of the United States, but there's still been an apocalypse and the overall mood didn't feel right to us. *New Vegas* is packed with detail and humour, but not as engrossing as we would have liked.

Reading back through this review, it reads a little negative, but that's simply because we're assuming you'll want to know how *New Vegas* compares to *Fallout 3*, and in that regard it's difficult to be very favourable. But *Fallout 3*

is a 97% game and *New Vegas* shares many of the qualities that made it one. It's huge, it's ambitious, it successfully blends a myriad of game elements together and it really feels like a game about you and the adventure you want to have. So long as you're not expecting *Fallout 4*, you will get an enormous amount of enjoyment from it.

Gavin Mackenzie

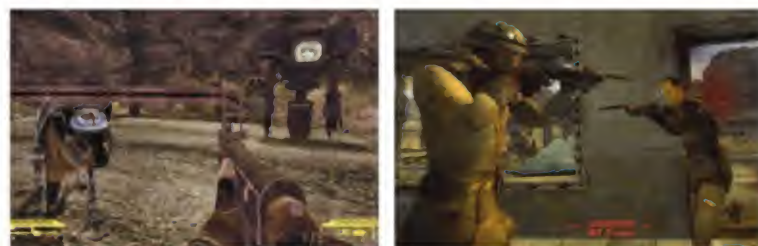
VERDICT

Not a forward step for the *Fallout* series, but a worthwhile sideways one nonetheless. The complexity and depth have been ramped up with some success, but in terms of polish and atmosphere it falls some way short of what *Fallout* fans might expect.

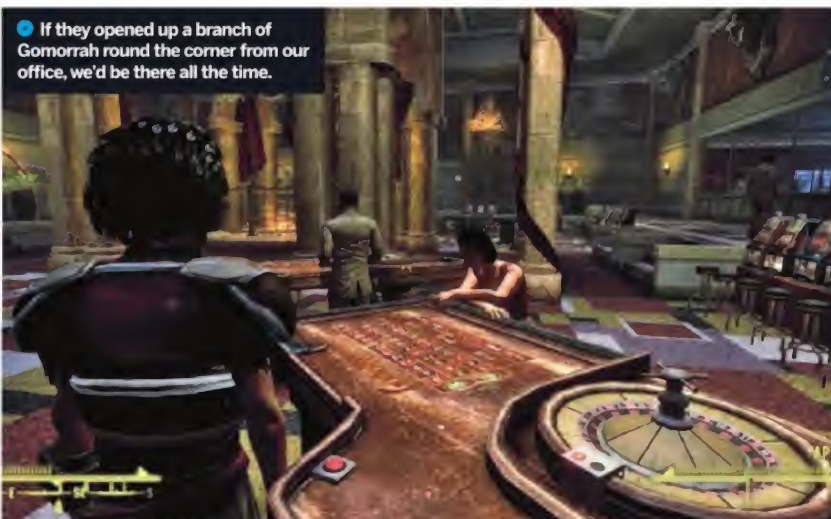
88%

NUCLEAR SIGHTS

Making *Fallout* just a bit more like an FPS



WE DEFINITELY FOUND ourselves fighting in real-time more in *New Vegas* than we did in *Fallout 3*, and there are a few reasons for this. First, VATS is less reliable than in *Fallout 3*. Remember those issues whereby you'd set up a string of attacks and they'd all fire into a nearby bit of scenery? More of that kind of thing. On a more positive note, though, the 'iron sights' aiming on most weapons makes real-time combat more effective, as does the fact that there are more area-of-effect weapons available.



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Medal Of Honor

Shock, awe, hearts, minds and modern warfare

PS3 'Respect for the soldier' – it's something that we've heard every time anything new came to light about this reboot of the *Medal Of Honor* franchise. The closest we've come to 'respect' for soldiers in recent years – at least from a mainstream perspective – is turning them into superheroes, super spies and general super men. Honestly, we weren't expecting much more from Danger Close's approach to the subject matter.

Setting the game in a conflict that still rages on to this day was an area in which we thought the game would falter and ultimately fail with its 'respect' agenda. We assumed the enemy would be painted as turban-toting bogeymen and nothing more, which wouldn't lend itself to a

There is no doubt in our mind that Danger Close has done exactly what it set out to do

strong case for 'respect' – more to a strong case for 'base level action movie'.

We're willing to say that, after playing through *Medal Of Honor*, we assumed quite wrong. This isn't an epic story in the vein of *Modern Warfare 2* – in fact, it isn't even much of a story, more a simple sequence of events and their consequences. As for 'respect'? While we can still question things like the ability to play as the Taliban in multiplayer (another argument for another time), there's no doubt in our mind that Danger Close has done exactly what it set out to do. By avoiding the grander scale, by focusing on three squads of soldiers and by avoiding the politicking surrounding the conflict in Afghanistan, the developer has managed to craft a strangely personal tale. One wrapped up in hundreds of headshots, knife kills and AC130 strikes, of course.

Medal Of Honor plays out pretty much exactly how you would expect – it's a first-person shooter that redefines no mechanics and brings very little new to the table. It's a game centred around the experience it offers rather than the way it goes about doing things.

Some may feel let down by this, some may not care. But one thing it is not is an over-the-top, set piece-based super adventure. There is variety in missions, and the manner in which the game flows from one squad to another – Tier 1 operative, a SEAL team and a squad of US Army Rangers (as well as the Apache gunner, of course) – is handled cleverly. But *Medal Of Honor* tells a much more sober, realistic tale of a few simple missions – no skiddoo chases, no nukes, no insane warlords threatening the stability of the world.

Having said that, there is the chance to drive around on a quad bike, taking out Taliban bases along the way and the aforementioned Apache gunner mission is a neat – and empowering – distraction that comes just after you feel at your lowest; overwhelmed and underpowered. Everything else that couldn't be classed as a set piece mission is either a pitched, cover-based firefight or a stealthy trudge – pretty standard stuff.

And while it is good fun and does offer a lot of variety, that's where *Medal Of Honor* falls down. It's decidedly *standard* throughout much of the single-player campaign. Things do get mixed up, but all too soon it reverts to a rather formulaic approach. It's not a game breaker by any stretch of the imagination, it's just a bit



DETAILS

Publisher EA
Developer Danger Close/DICE
Price £49.99
Players 1-24
Genre First-person shooter
Supports 720p, PlayStation Network, Downloadable content, DualShock 3
Age Rating 18
Website www.medalofhonor.com

THE THREE APPROACHES IN MOH

The scalpel, the sledgehammer and the scalpelhammer



THE THREE DIFFERENT units that make up the majority of the game have three different approaches to combat – though admittedly two of them are very similar. The Tier 1 operatives (equivalent to any other special forces unit) are the quiet, precise, stealthy types who blow off heads and stalk the enemy. The SEAL team operate in a similar style, though they seem to blow more things up more obviously – though that may have been our imagination. As for the US Army Rangers? Well, let's just say they're not averse to employing liberal minigun use.



Multiplayer can be intense or more thoughtful, but it's often exciting.



This guy's probably a baddie.

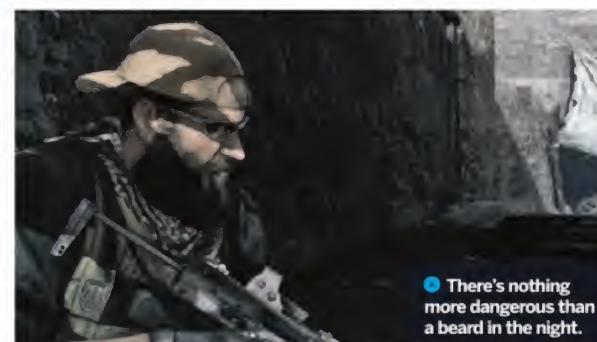
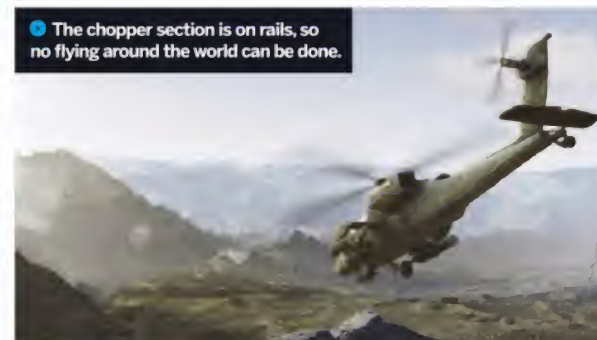
of a let down. Mechanically things are sound – bar some issues we had with sliding into cover – but rather than being blown away (figuratively speaking), we just felt everything worked to a satisfactory level.

Once finished with the main campaign, those fearful of the competitive, multiplayer side of things do have another option available to them. Tier 1 mode allows players to take on the missions from the single-player campaign with the goal of completing them under a preset par time. There are stipulations, though – the difficulty is ramped up and HUD elements are stripped down to the bare minimum. You will go down after just a few shots, enemies are more aggressive, the ammo you start with is all you have (necessitating constant salvage of fallen enemies' weapons) and all of this is put up against strict time limits. If you complete the mission outside of par, fair enough – you've passed. But you'll be wanting to rack up the medals by coming in under par, and with few of the missions offering a completion time of less than 20 minutes this involves extended periods of concentration. It's clear why the mode is named Tier 1.

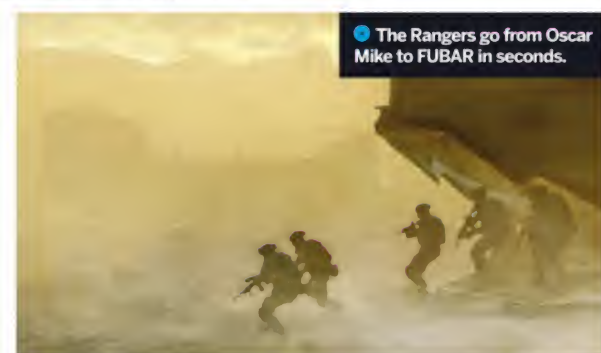
We did find the length and difficulty of the missions to be a bit much at times, but to complain about this would be to miss the point. The Tier 1 missions are meant to be as



The chopper section is on rails, so no flying around the world can be done.



There's nothing more dangerous than a beard in the night.



The Rangers go from Oscar Mike to FUBAR in seconds.



challenging as they are rewarding and, though there are some more genuine issues, it's a great challenge for those who want to eke a bit more out of the game and really master the techniques and strategies for play.

It doesn't lend itself well to quick, constant retries because of the length of each mission, but all the same there is a competitive element to the mode. Online leaderboards rank you against the rest of the world in things like time taken, headshots made and how long you managed to freeze the clock through 'skill shots' and melee attacks. It does still suffer from the problems the single-player game has, as we covered earlier, and failing a mission because ten seconds are taken up with your comrades getting into a boost-up position (meaning the failure is *not your fault*) does happen and is utterly, utterly infuriating.

Then, of course, we step into the world of full-on online multiplayer, the realm of the fine Swedish developers DICE. It's been pointed out before but we have to reiterate: this is not the game that was available in beta form earlier this year. Changes have swept the board, meaning *Medal Of Honor's* multiplayer not only looks better than it did, it plays better. It may as well be said early on, though – we're not sure it's a strong enough online component to seriously challenge *Modern Warfare 2* (or *Black Ops*). It >



Even HUD elements were changed from the beta.





● This guy is one of the SEALs. He has a nice beard.

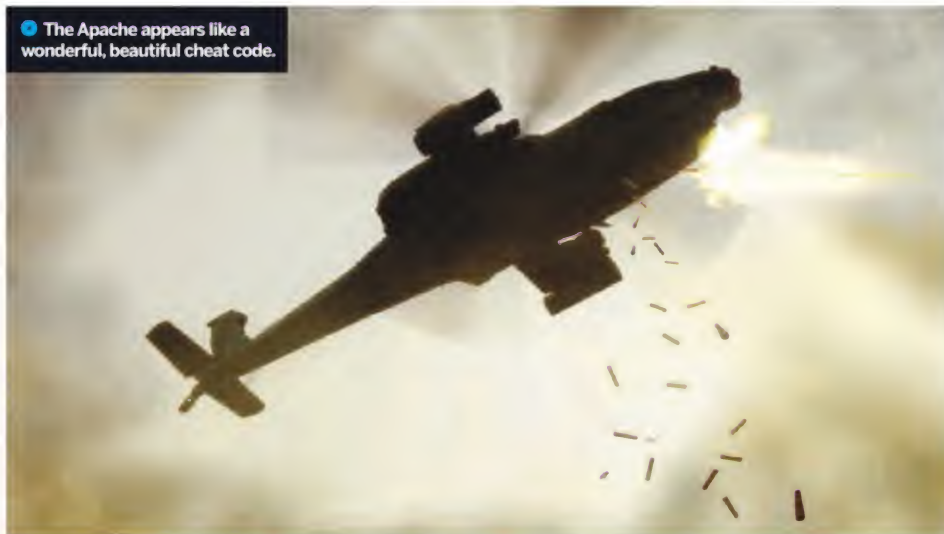


● Objective Raid is intense. Very intense.



● The game rarely looks as nice as this, truth be told.

● The Apache appears like a wonderful, beautiful cheat code.



> plays well – very well – and is a lot of fun, but it doesn't feel like much more than a stopgap between now and *Battlefield 3*.

But we're not leaving this without at least a bit of gushing, as some of the modes on *Medal Of Honor's* online component are fantastically good fun, it's very well designed (unsurprisingly) and while we're not sure if it can stand up to the might of *MW2*, it can certainly put up a good fight. Four game modes are available for play from the outset: Team Assault is the most straightforward, simply offering team deathmatch; Sector Control is another familiar mode, playing out like any other conquest or domination mode you could think of; Objective Raid is a fast-paced, intense mode where two teams have to either attack or defend two objectives with a time limit of around five minutes; and Combat Mission pits two teams against each other with a linear path of objectives to work through – blowing up barricades, defending areas and so on. Basically DICE has opted for two familiar modes of play and two that go down paths not heavily trodden by online shooters in recent years.

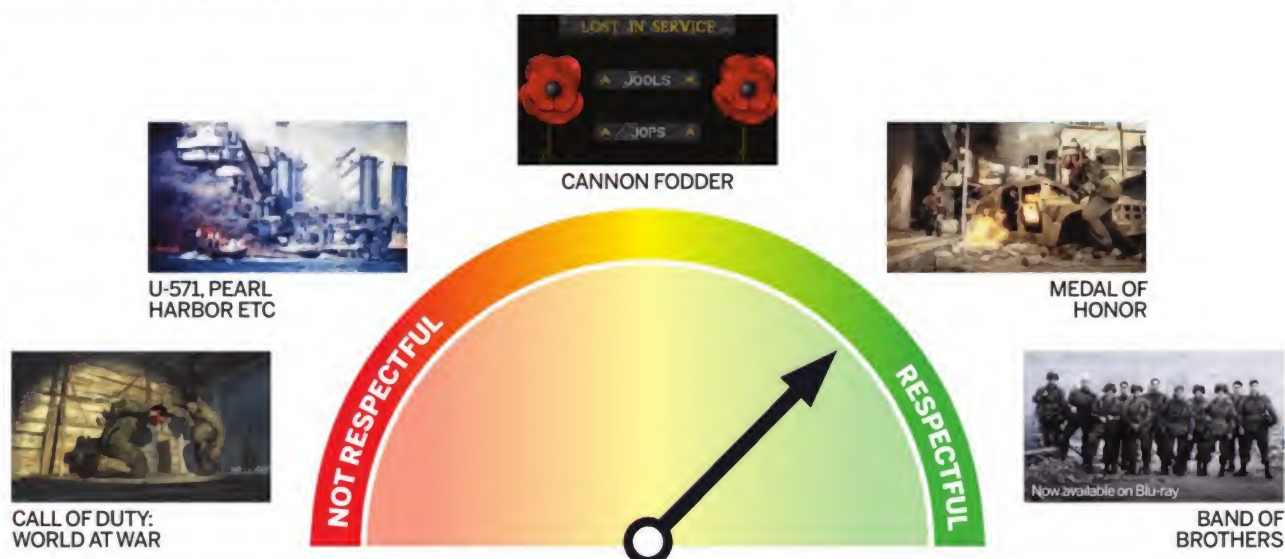
While there's little that lifts *Medal Of Honor* above its competitors – including *Bad Company 2* – in the more standard modes of Team Assault and Sector Control things really pick up and interest piques. Sector Control is so intense and over so soon that it's difficult to get bored of it – you can approach objectives (whether attacking or defending) in any order you want, and plans with fellow players will be made up, rethought and abandoned multiple times in each match. Do you launch an all-out assault on A, or spread your forces between A and B? On the other side of things do you want to have a very obvious, heavy defence and get involved in a pitched firefight, or do you want to hole up and hide out, picking off the enemy as





IT'S THE RESPECT-O-METER!

Danger Close regularly claims *Medal Of Honor* to be a 'respectful' game, but *just how* respectful is it to the servicemen and women of the world's armed forces? Let's see...



they approach the objectives? Each game may only be around the five-minute mark, but there's enough strategy and quick-thinking present in every single match to fill a much longer game.

Combat Mission, conversely, is the more drawn-out of the online modes with missions lasting as long as some of the single-player campaigns. A series of objectives are taken on – by attackers and defenders – with more open maps available and a focus on a more considered approach. Of course, you can just jump in the tank and try to plough through the enemies, but that probably won't work.

DICE has tried to cover as many bases as it can with its online portion, offering a selection of classes, character upgrades, weapon modifications, perks and leaderboards. It's a fine online offering, though – as we've said a few times now – we honestly don't think it's a true contender for the online throne. That place is reserved for *Battlefield 3*.

Medal Of Honor is a very good game, there's no doubt about that. It doesn't really bring

Some of the modes on *Medal Of Honor*'s online component are fantastically good fun

a whole lot that you haven't seen before to the genre, but it does operate in a way we didn't expect. 'Respect' is a word that's been thrown around for a while to back up Danger Close's game, and while we're still a mite fuzzy on the moral implications of setting a game during an ongoing conflict, there's no doubt the developers made a concerted effort to represent military exploits in an accurate, harrowing and sympathetic fashion.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

We've opted to score *Medal Of Honor* based on both its single and multiplayer modes, as with *MW2* and *BC2*. In this regard, it's a very good game. Single-player would be a little less, but this is the 'total package' score.

86%





DETAILS

Publisher
EA Sports
Developer
EA Tiburon
Price
£49.99
Players
1-2
Genre
Sports
Supports
720p, PlayStation Network,
Downloadable content, DualShock 3
Age Rating
16
Website
www.mma.easports.com

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

EA Sports MMA

A talented new challenger enters the ring

PS3 You don't quite feel the pain, nor can you get a broken nose from playing the game. But 19 minutes into a 20-minute match, with both fighters struggling to stay standing, blood pouring from open cuts on both of them but neither even thinking about giving up – it's at that point you can really *feel MMA*.

You tap out with ten seconds left, you're damn well going to feel that pain. You land a well-timed (otherwise known as 'lucky') roundhouse kick to get the KO just before the bell goes, you're damn well going to feel

elated. The mere fact that *EA MMA* can make you feel these highs and lows – the fact that it can keep you utterly compelled for matches lasting up to half an hour – is why we can genuinely say this pretender to the throne has waltzed in and put up a genuine, strong fight for the crown.

This brash, good-looking newcomer has all of the usual EA spit and polish you would expect from the company, meaning it definitely looks and sounds the part. As for how it plays? Well, it takes some adjustment, that's for certain, whether you're coming in cold or straight from the loving embrace of *UFC Undisputed*. The game takes cues from *Fight Night* in its punching (and kicking) dynamic, with the right stick offering the 'total strike control' EA is all too happy to spout off about. Good thing it works then, really. Combinations are easy to pull off, and the more advanced you get at the game the more likely you are to be able to pull off a jab

fake straight into a Muay Thai clinch with a trip takedown. Or something. Just make sure you take part in the career mode training, or you are likely to be lost.

Once you're over the hump the game opens up into a world of brilliant, utterly brutal brawling, with a huge lump of strategy thrown in for good measure. It's immensely satisfying – a good sign for any game – and the fun doesn't let up even after extended play.

This brash, good-looking newcomer has all of the usual EA spit and polish you would expect

Reversals and blocking of your opponent's moves is a simple enough affair and shows itself to be far more about reactions than it is about knowing the correct way to twist your analogue stick. When your foe tries to shift position, your pad will rumble. Press the **○** button in good time and you will block or reverse their move. It's deceptively simple,



THINK ABOUT IT

When tactics need to be more than 'PUNCH HIM'

ONE WAY IN which *EA Sports MMA* bucks the trend of the more simulation-styled fighters out there is by avoiding things such as button bashing. If you want to lock in a submission and make your opponent tap out you're going to have to carefully mix between applying pressure (a tap of the button) and

keeping your stamina up (not tapping the button). On the other side of the fence, though, you're going to want to fight against the pressure while keeping up enough stamina, and therefore strength, to fight against having your joints snapped. It's a simple change, but it makes a lot of difference.



Or you could try



UFC Undisputed 2010 Issue 193
The only alternative to *MMA*, but a genuine alternative all the same. **88%**



and when you consider the other controls (△ to stand up and ⊗ to make an advance) you'll see where the more complex issues come into play. It should be noted that a functioning DualShock pad is essential, otherwise you won't be able to judge when your opponent is attempting to switch positions on you – meaning you won't be able to block or reverse them as effectively.

There are areas where the game is lacking, and it's certain that some simply won't get on with the new control scheme (though that is remedied by changing it to 'classic' controls, which have more in common with *UFC Undisputed*). There does seem to be a bit of a lack of content in the game, especially when compared to its competitor – transitions are notable in that some positions are altogether absent, for example. It's quite cynical for us to say they're clearly being saved for the next *EA*

MMA title, but it's not that much of a push to assume they are.

Then there's the issue of difficulty. Against another person, *MMA* is great fun, rarely frustrating and – thanks to the great control scheme – you rarely get overwhelmed by an opponent with no way of fighting against it. But against the AI there are issues – ones remedied by lowering the difficulty, but ones that are present. It seems that in certain fights, at certain difficulties, the computer will simply reverse/block nine out of ten of your attempts to grapple, or gain a better position. It should also be noted that some training exercises can prove excessively difficult, though to be fair you only have to ace them once. None of this is a game breaker, though, it's just a collection of mild irritants.

EA MMA isn't good enough to completely blow *UFC Undisputed* out of the water, but

it is more than good enough to hold its own and improve upon THQ's game in a number of ways. Both titles will have their fans, and while we're finding it hard to pick one over the other, for now it's probably *MMA* that's just edging it. Nevertheless, it's a great time to be a fan of mixed martial arts as, unlike in the world of football games, these are sports titles that still have something to prove. There's an exciting future for man-punching ahead.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

EA MMA is a very good, solid simulation and a fine alternative to *UFC Undisputed*. It doesn't have everything to make it a truly great game, but it does offer enough to keep hardened brawling fans happy.

89%





Characters look a little like upscaled PS2 models.

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW



DETAILS

Publisher
Ubisoft
Developer
In-House
Price
£39.99
Players
1
Genre
Sports
Supports
720p, PlayStation Network, Sixaxis, DualShock 3, Dolby Digital 5.1
Age Rating
3
Website
shaunwhitegame.uk.ubi.com



We know exactly what you're thinking – 'why is a snowboard legend getting his own

skateboarding game now?' It seems a little strange, sure, but after playing *Shaun White Skateboarding* you will quickly amass a whole list of far more pertinent questions. For example, why does your character turn into a pile of balls whenever you bail? Why are you able to shape and ride elements of the environment with your mind? Why is your created character so good on a skateboard within seconds of picking one up for the first time in the game's intro movie? Why are there hacking mini-games in an extreme sports game? And why, in the name of everything that is holy, does the supposedly noble task of rescuing the captured Shaun White and overthrowing

the controlling Ministry involve painting the city in garish colours and turning its hard-working citizens into slack-jawed skating fans? These questions and many others are served up – almost unanimously without answer, we hasten to add – by *Shaun White Skateboarding*, easily one of the silliest extreme sports titles we've ever seen but one that's all the more memorable for it.

First of all there's the concept, which is far from the best and the process of bringing colour and freedom back to a dystopian society by skating around it all feels extremely forced and like Ubisoft is trying too hard to seem cool. This is equally evident in the game's stupid cut-scenes, from the cringeworthy dialogue to the hateful cast of characters and, while it feels a little remiss to criticise a

skating game for something so trivial as its movie sequences, you do have to question

the value of an extreme sports title having cut-scenes in the first place. Such eyebrow-raising moments are quickly forgotten once your created skater fully realises his or her power, though – as silly as it is that you can skate on imaginary rails and bend the world to make it more skate-friendly, it's a unique and rewarding mechanic that puts no small amount of distance between *Shaun White Skateboarding* and the competition. It also means there's no shortage of potentially lucrative lines to hit, the already well-designed cityscapes made even more inviting and interesting by the ability to twist and alter bits of the world at will.

It looks somewhat ropey and the physics and mechanics might not be the best the genre has ever seen but despite all its flaws and its ludicrously over-thought setting, *Shaun White Skateboarding* is actually a pretty enjoyable game. Some of the goals set are inventive and as silly as the mind

Despite all its flaws and its ludicrously over-thought setting, this is actually a pretty enjoyable game



There's no collision detection with pedestrians.



Later areas can become a mess of intertwined rails.

powers are, there's no question that their functionality adds something to the skateboarding genre that no previous titles could boast. Linking a lengthy series of rails, lowering the ground to slide under a wall at the last minute, saving yourself from a long fall by conjuring up rail-shaped salvation from thin air... it's moments like these when *Shaun White Skateboarding* empowers most and you just have to step back from how ridiculous it all is and say, 'okay, that was pretty cool.'

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

The *Skate* series has the realism side of things sewn up, so kudos to Ubisoft for spotting the sweet little spot at the other end of the spectrum where *Hawk* used to hang out in his heyday.

70%





RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

NHL 11

The icing on the cake

● Be A Pro mode plays more closely to the main game than other EA Sports titles.



DETAILS

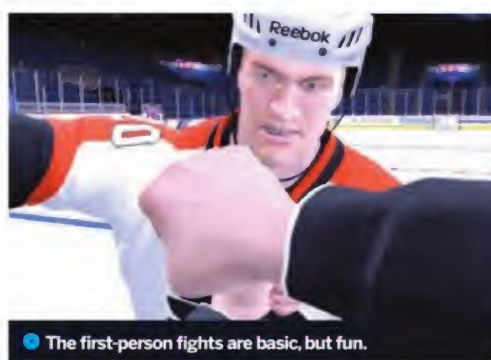
Publisher
EA Sports
Developer
EA Canada
Price
£49.99
Players
1-10
Genre
Sports
Supports
720p, PlayStation Network, Downloadable content, DualShock 3
Age Rating
16
Website
<http://nhl.easports.com>

PS3 Lacking the high-scoring hi-jinks of other popular US sports, ice hockey has long enjoyed a home at EA Sports via its ever-consistent *NHL* series, racking up fans worldwide since the 16-bit era. However, unlike the label's other sporting franchises – *FIFA* springs to mind – *NHL* has struggled to integrate notable technical and gameplay innovation year in, year out. While numerous tweaks and additions have been made to *NHL 11*, as last year, the game is still playable via the included two-button *NHL '94* control system, suggesting things haven't progressed significantly over the last decade.

Although playing with *NHL '94* controls did fill us with nostalgia, that view is not

NHL is proof that subtle refinement year on year is infinitely preferable to knee-jerk feature modification

entirely true or fair – at least on this occasion. Even *FIFA* got a two-button control setting this year. Instead, *NHL* is proof that subtle refinement year on year is infinitely preferable to knee-jerk feature modification, resulting in the most balanced – and realistic – *NHL*



● The first-person fights are basic, but fun.

game to date. While the *FIFAs* of this world annually sport new player animations, and improved gameplay, the greasy, ice-based physics of *NHL* have felt spot-on for a number

of years, leaving the development team to concentrate on other areas; body-checking now boasts a new physics system,

resulting in all types of awkward-looking man-tangles, while control of stick-less players can be retained to check opponents, go after the puck or find another stick.

Like other EA Sports franchises the controls have been honed over a number of iterations, and remain pretty much the same as *NHL 10*. The use of the right analogue stick for shooting remains a satisfying mechanic, with players able to call upon deke feints, slap shots and placed shots with ease. Scoring is still tough, however, thanks in part to some solid defensive AI, a challenging passing system and your sometimes-unsupportive team-mates during offensives.



● Scoring is immensely rewarding, as it doesn't happen much initially.



● Other mini-competitions, like shootout offer snippets of party-like fun.



● The action effortlessly cuts to replays and close-up animations.

Games zip by, however, and minor new features such as disallowed goals and celebrations combined with traditions such as unobtrusive referees – and the occasional fight – add enough extra polish to make *NHL 11* an authentic, varied slice of sporting action. Hockey fans will also welcome the Ultimate Team card-trading element, which joins the omnipresent Be A Pro and last year's Be A General Manager modes – in addition to the league and play-offs – to ensure long-lasting competition. As always, though, it's the addictive, fast-paced hockey that will keep you coming back, which is as good here as it's ever been.

Tom Hopkins

VERDICT

Casual hockey fans who own *NHL 10* will probably manage without this year's tweaks, but anyone looking for fun, fast-paced action that's part sports sim and part arcade bash-'em-up need look no further.

89%



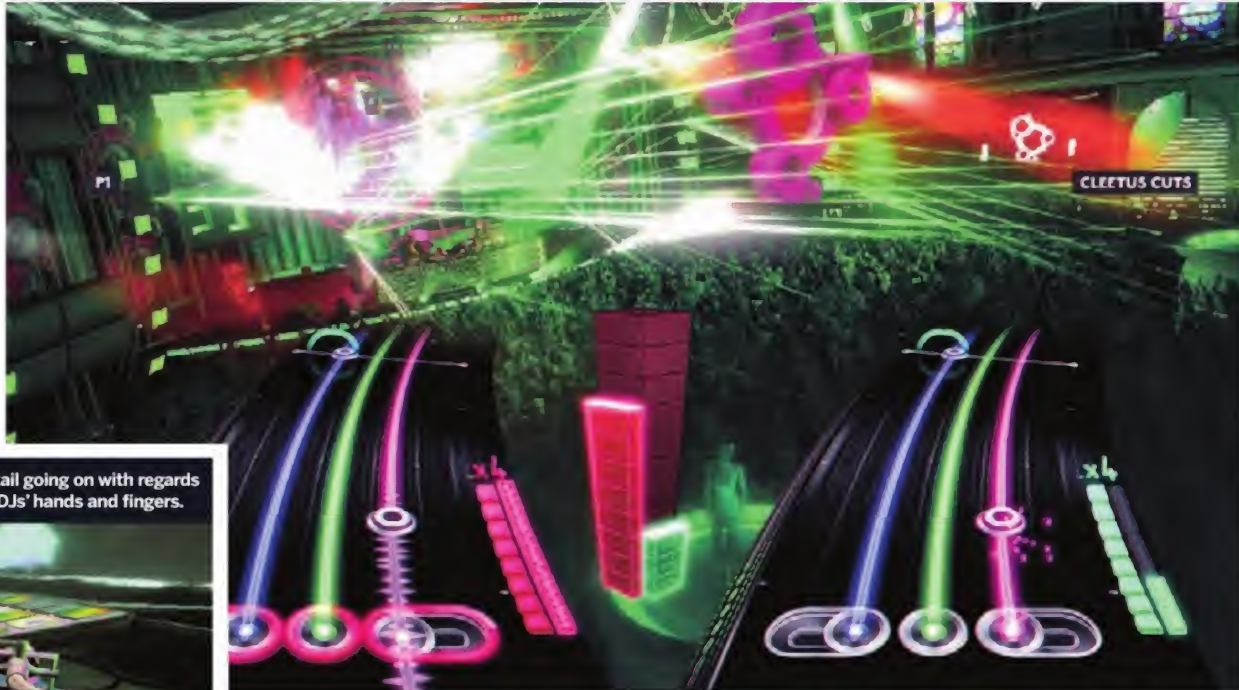
● Face-offs are all about timing, but feel a little unresponsive.

In this series



NHL 10 Issue 184

A bit light on the additions and isn't recommended to those who bought 09.85%



There's a lot more detail going on with regards to the movement of the DJs' hands and fingers.



We imagine Deadmau5 has a fair amount of trouble fitting through doors with those ears.



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

DJ Hero 2

More than a simple remix?

DETAILS

Publisher
Activision
Developer
FreeStyleGames
Price
£49.99 (£99.99 with peripheral)
Players
1-3
Genre
Rhythm Action
Supports
1080i, 720p, PlayStation Network, Downloadable Content, Dolby Digital 5.1
Age Rating
12
Website
www.djhero.com



Our living rooms are no longer living rooms. They've become storage spaces for plastic musical instruments. The blasted devices clutter corners, peak out from beneath coffee tables, or – as is the case with our *Guitar Hero* drum kit – find themselves used as foot rests.

How refreshing, then, for a rhythm-action sequel to be released with no new peripheral required. We might still be able to leave the front room without treading on a miniature guitar for a few more months.

DJ Hero 2 doesn't need a new peripheral because it's the gameplay that required refinement, not the way we interacted with it. FreeStyleGames has cleverly isolated those elements of the first game that delivered the most fun first time round and iterated upon these established mechanics with new ideas.

The mixing, for instance. Those experienced with *DJ Hero* will know that

mashups were at their best when they allowed the player some control over the mix, and *DJ Hero 2* takes this personalisation to a whole new level. Twisting the effects dial modifies the music in several different ways; freestyle crossfade sections allow players to drop out or bring in the track they choose; and the red-button-triggered samples are now song-specific, meaning you won't be hearing Flava Flav's "Yeeeeeeaaaahhhhh boy" ad infinitum. Some ideas don't work so well – freestyle scratching doesn't add a great deal – but your involvement with the game nevertheless feels far more accentuated.

It's the game's track list that's the real disappointment, though. Far from terrible, but lacking the sense of impact delivered by the first game, the mashups are geared further towards the Timbaland and Lil Wayne

end of the spectrum. It feels like there's slightly less inventiveness given over to song splicing – where's the Dizzee Rascal versus Justice epicness?

Still, there's just enough to get your juices flowing no matter your musical taste, and with over 70 mashups, and new gameplay additions like Party Play, DJ Battles and the ability to bring in a third player to sing, it'd be

It's not a drastic update but it's still good value for money

disingenuous to suggest FreeStyleGames hasn't done itself proud for a little less than a year's work.

Would it be fair to call the game '*DJ Hero 1.5*'? Perhaps. It's certainly not a drastic update, but it's good value for money nevertheless. This one was the easy sequel, though. Come the third entry FreeStyleGames is going to have to do something altogether more special to earn its praise. A new twin-deck peripheral perhaps? Ah, what's the harm; we need a new doorstop.

Chris McMahon

VERDICT

Functionally *DJ Hero 2* is a far more involved and entertaining game than its predecessor, but a sense of familiarity means it never hits the same heights.

88%



Throughout the single-player mode you go from underground DJ to become the number one in Ibiza.



There are real-life DJs who actually look like this. Seriously, check out The Bloody Beetroots...

In this series



DJ Hero Issue 186

It's a less evolved version of the game, but the tracks are definitely better. 91%

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Front Mission Evolved

No jokes about the word 'wanzer'. Promise



DETAILS

Publisher
Square Enix
Developer
Double Helix Games
Price
£44.99
Players
1-8
Genre
Third-person shooter
Supports
720p, PlayStation Network, DualShock 3
Age Rating
16+
Website
www.frontmissionevolved.com



Say what you want about *Front Mission Evolved* – at least it's better than Double Helix's last effort, *GI Joe: The Rise Of Cobra* (**Play** 183, 22%). If things keep going this way then in two or three games' time Double Helix will have a bona-fide good game on its hands. For now, though, we have to accept the fact that *FME* just isn't very good at all.

Let's not leap straight into the bad stuff, though – *FME* does have some redeeming factors, though none of it enough to save the game from ignominy. The storyline is faithful to the originals and, while the mechanics of the game are completely different to its turn-based history, it is a functional third-person shooter (mainly in giant robots). Customisation can be fun and is at least not as initially overwhelming as that in the *Armored Core* series. But that's about it, really.

Oh – you can make your wanzer a funny colour if you want.

The bad? Well the aiming is too sensitive meaning it's difficult to pull off something the game encourages you to pull off. Namely: you can't disable

Switch your brain off and you might get some enjoyment. Might.

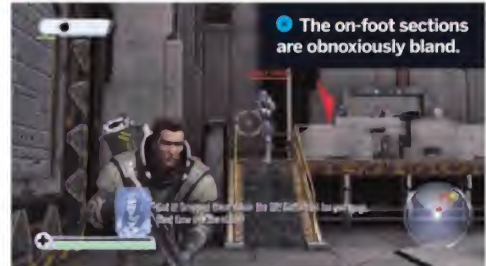


At least it's better than Double Helix's last effort, *GI Joe: The Rise Of Cobra*

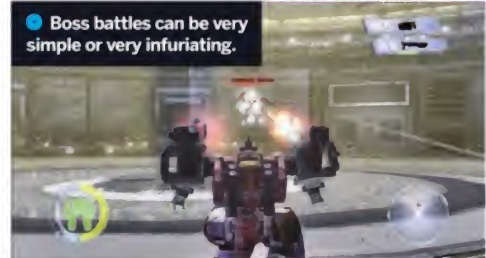
enemy units with precision fire, like you should be able to. Enemy defensive AI amounts to sidestepping in and out of cover, repeatedly, until the player is within striking distance – they then retreat to a safe distance and begin the loop again.

FME doesn't look very good. The camera becomes confused and snagged on scenery. There's little warning when you're about to die. Voice acting is poor. On-foot sections are verging on abysmal and there is absolutely no need for them at all. Boss battles are cheap, and you will hear the boss repeat the same two or three phrases repeatedly throughout. We also have to question the logic of a story that doesn't do too good a job of explaining itself to newcomers. One *Front Mission* game

The on-foot sections are obnoxiously bland.



Boss battles can be very simple or very infuriating.



has ever been released officially in Europe. That's right, *one*. It should be assumed the audience is new to the franchise, and – for once – things should be explained to them in excruciating detail.

We're running out of room here, but honestly – if you want the full list of our issues with *FME* just write in and ask. We'll be all too happy to send it out.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

Hamstrung by a long list of issues, *Front Mission Evolved* is just not a very good game. It's not broken and it has a couple of fun elements, but all in all there is no way we can honestly recommend it.

52%



One of the better sections. Shame it's repeated multiple times.



Customisation is a bit of fun.



Rorona actually starts off with a fairly fancy combat power.



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland

Now where did we put that gold recipe?



PS3

Publisher NIS Europe Developer Gust Price £44.99
Players 1 Genre RPG Supports 1080p Age Rating 12
Website www.nisamerica.com/games/roro/

More than two thirds of all new businesses fail within their first year. That can't

be any comfort for Rorona, a dizzy 17-year-old apprentice alchemist whose master has abandoned her to run the shop, which is being threatened with closure by a Palace official. She has one opportunity to save the workshop, though: create all kinds of household and esoteric concoctions to order. Rorona's only just received her beginner's alchemy handbook, so she must learn fast!

Like a typical JRPG, Rorona and her entourage gain experience and level up via turn-based battles with the creatures they encounter while gathering ingredients. It's a pretty familiar system for anyone with even a little experience of RPGs, but the traditional RPG system isn't the main dynamic at work here.

While Cole is the currency of Arland, time is the main currency of *Atelier Rorona*. Exploring new areas for different ingredients costs upwards of a day, 'Synthesising' new potions and



If you go down to the woods today... you might not get back until tomorrow.

items from your gathered ingredients costs hours, resting, learning new recipes, advancing the plot – all of this will eat into the precious time that's allocated to you by the palace to purvey bespoke goods. You must consider the efficiency of each action and prioritise where necessary. It's also a very accessible game, which should make it a pleasant diversion for fans of RPGs.

Ben Biggs

VERDICT

A comparatively shallow RPG, but fun and accessible, with a very *Harvest Moon*/*Rune Factory Frontier* time dynamic to it that unfolds into an engrossing strategic game.

77%



Synthesis is a fundamental part of your game. Return to the workshop to craft more items.



Bang is as awesome as ever.



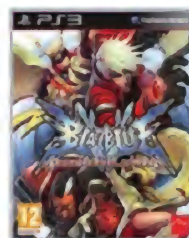
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

BlazBlue: Continuum Shift

Now an open-invite anime smackdown

PS3

Publisher Zen United Developer Arc System Works Price £39.99
Players 1-2 Genre Beat-'em-up Supports 1080p, PlayStation Network, Downloadable content, DualShock 3, Dolby Digital 5.1 Age Rating 12
Website www.blazblue.com



If you're reading this review, chances are you've played a *Street Fighter* game before and that makes you a very lovely person

indeed. Making the leap from *Street Fighter* to *BlazBlue* can be daunting even for genre veterans. It's a shame because it's a series all beat-'em-up fans should experience.

The clever folk at developer Arc System Works must have realised this, because they've made this game so accessible that even your nan could play it. It's surprisingly easy to stroll into practice mode and let the superb tutorials guide you through *BlazBlue*'s labyrinthine move sets.

Two core characters have been added to the mix; the shadowy Hazama is a close-quarters chap, stringing together small, sharp attacks to disorientate opponents, while the angelic Tsubaki can unleash swift aerial dashes and brutal chain combos. With additional DLC characters up for grabs after launch, the roster is one of the most diverse in the genre.



One of the most diverse rosters around.

Many gameplay features, such as the Heat Gauge and Distortion Drive finishers remain, bolstered by a new Guard Primer system that depletes characters' guard meters each time a Guard Break move lands successfully. It's a neat system that forces players to juggle offence and defence cautiously.

Online competition is as fierce as ever, but thanks to the tutorials, competing on this level is no longer the realm of the arcade stick ninja. Now, go forth and hit things.

Dave Cook

VERDICT

With the best 2D sprite animation around and furiously paced gameplay, *Continuum Shift* surpasses its predecessor. We can't recommend this enough.

94%

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes

The dawning of a new dynasty on PS3



DETAILS

Publisher
Capcom
Developer
Capcom
Price
£29.99
Players
1-2
Genre
Beat-'em-up
Supports
720p,
DualShock 3,
Dolby Digital 5.1
Age Rating
16
Website
www.samuraiheroes.com

PS3 To suggest that *Sengoku Basara* is a *Dynasty Warriors* clone would be unfair, inaccurate and just plain wrong. It's clearly a *Samurai Warriors* clone.

Seriously, it even has most of the same characters. This is because they're loosely based on the same real-life historical figures but still, some of the character designs seem to sail dangerously close to *Samurai Warriors*' copyright wind. It seems to be, in many ways, more of a spoof than a clone, though. It takes what is already a pretty silly template and makes it sillier. Our character of choice, Magoichi Saika – same name as in *Samurai Warriors*, different gender – is armed not just with a single musket, but with several pistols, a pump-action shotgun, hand grenades, two machine guns and a multi-shot bazooka. You can tell this game shares a producer with *Devil May Cry 4*.

This silliness isn't just for the sake of poking fun, though, it does make *Sengoku Basara* a more fun and more varied game than most of the Koei titles it apes. The combat is still pretty repetitive, but in a slightly less button-bashy, more thoughtful way. Plus, each character does



● Yeah, that's a samurai with not one but two chainsaws. You want to play it now, don't you.

You can tell this game shares a producer with *Devil May Cry 4*

have a genuinely different gameplay style, so you get 12 that are all worth trying out rather than over a hundred that are all essentially the same.

The downside, when compared to the *Warriors* games, is that *Sengoku Basara* is found rather lacking in the strategy department. There is some openness to the battlefields, but exploring different areas won't have much impact on the overall sway of the battle – it's more about finding bonus collectables and completing optional objectives. This means you don't get that feeling that the tide of battle is turning because you're such a badass, but then you also don't get much of the tedious toing and froing between attack and defence that can occur in *Warriors* games.

Another weakness of *Sengoku Basara* is that it's clearly a Wii game running in HD – the visuals are nice for what they are,



● Did we mention that *Devil May Cry* was also a big influence? We did? Just checking.



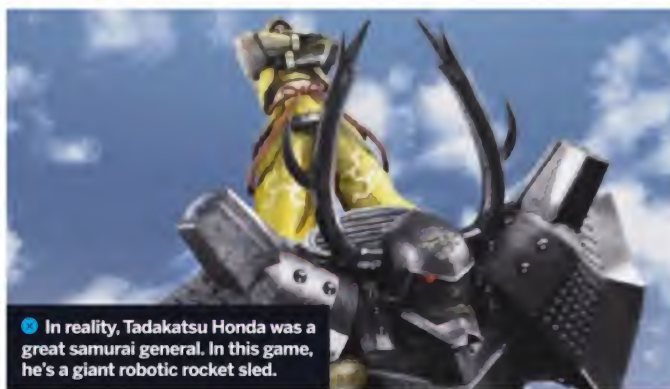
but they are last-gen. The low price point is acknowledgement on Capcom's part that this is no triple-A, full-price release and, if you don't mind the basic technology, it certainly makes this a value-for-money package, given all the addictive levelling up and item collecting there is to be done. It might not do anything new with its genre but, given how badly *Dynasty Warriors* has lost its way recently, *Sengoku Basara* still stands as the best game of its somewhat peculiar kind on the PS3.

Gavin Mackenzie

VERDICT

Unashamedly dated, but still surprisingly addictive and good fun if *Warriors* games are your bag. It's better, if less strategic, than recent *Dynasty Warriors* titles, although that's not saying very much.

76%



● In reality, Tadakatsu Honda was a great samurai general. In this game, he's a giant robotic rocket sled.





DETAILS

Publisher
Sony
Developer
Quantic Dream
Price
£29.99
Players
1
Genre
Adventure
Supports
720p, Downloadable
content, Sixaxis,
DualShock 3,
PlayStation Move,
Dolby Digital 5.1
Age Rating
18
Website
www.heavyrainps3.
com



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Heavy Rain: Move Edition



Heavy strain more like



First we should point out that the Move Edition of *Heavy Rain* is everything the original game was – you can still play it with a pad – with Move compatibility thrown in as an extra. So there's still a 94% game in here, that hasn't changed.



But the purpose of this review is to evaluate what, if anything, Move brings to the *Heavy Rain* party, and the score reflects that.

The short answer is nothing, really. *Heavy Rain* is probably the PS3's most divisive game, but we're confident everyone will agree that playing it with Move doesn't make it any better at all, *except* when your character is using a TV remote. In that one instance, it almost felt like the real thing.

All it does is make things more complicated and less accurate so you're more likely to fail tasks and consequently hinder the pace of the story. The action prompts don't just specify direction of movement, but also the angle at which you should be holding the wand.



Because of this, as well as the fuller physical movements required, everything takes longer to do, but the time limits for actions don't seem to have been increased accordingly. If they have, it's not by enough. There's no two ways about it, *Heavy Rain* is better with a pad.

Gavin Mackenzie

VERDICT

The same ambitious, progressive and atmospheric 'interactive drama' is still there, but adding Move to it is about as pointless as shouting "Jason!" over and over again in exactly the same tone of voice.

70%



DETAILS

Publisher
Ubisoft
Developer
Asobo Studio
Price
£24.99
Players
1-4
Genre
Sports
Supports
1080p, 1080i,
720p, PlayStation
Age Rating
3
Website
www.racketsports
game.ubi.com

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Racket Sports

Like British players, simply not very good



It didn't take long for the wave of dirge to hit us, and the first signs we're about to be drowned in shovelware have come from a source we forgot even existed: *Racket Sports*.

Originally a Nintendo Wii game, it was received poorly by most simply because

How are we supposed to react, apart from by stifling a laugh?

it didn't take much advantage of the technologically inferior Wii motion controller.



Now it's using the superior Move technology and *nothing has changed*. How are we supposed to react, apart from by stifling a laugh and moving back to *Sports Champions*?

You can play in any of a whopping five sports (all involving racquets), and they all play pretty much the same: badly. None of the games manage to make you feel like you have any real control over what's going on. Tennis is *Wii Sports*' Tennis in all but name. Badminton is a joke (swing hard: win). Table tennis has already been bested by the aforementioned *Sports Champions*. Squash plays nothing like



squash. Beach tennis is another joke (swing hard again: win again).

While it looks clean and cute, *Racket Sports* is also unrelentingly bland in its presentation. There is nothing – *nothing* – that will stick in your mind about it and you will feel nothing but disappointment when you play it.

What an abject waste of time. We're genuinely annoyed there will be an inevitable load of crap like this foisted onto Move.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

Racket Sports is pretty much unforgivable tripe. It's boring, bland and doesn't actually work properly. If you want to waste your time with it, feel free. But don't say you haven't been warned.

37%



RELEASE DATE: 5 NOVEMBER

Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage

Bloody. Stupid. Bloody stupid



Publisher Tecmo Koei Developer Koei Price £49.99 Players 1-2 Genre Beat-'em-up Supports 720p, DualShock 3, Dolby Digital 5.1 Age Rating 18 Website www.kensrage.com



If you've heard of *Fist Of The North Star* then you probably first heard of it when you were about 11, and thought it must be the

best thing ever because you'd loved cartoons your entire life and were just getting interested in the joys of extreme violence. That some genius in Japan had thought to combine the two seemed unreal. But if by now you've passed the legal age required to buy this game, you ought to have realised that *Fist Of The North Star* is drivel. The best and worst thing you can say about *Ken's Rage* is that it's true to the manga and anime. The story, characters and script are embarrassingly bad, and the game itself is only marginally better.

As you'd expect from Koei, this is essentially yet another half-hearted spin on the *Dynasty Warriors* formula. It's all pretty linear aside from a few side paths leading to bonus power-ups and the like.

The violence is ridiculously over the top. Enemies explode messily when



you kick and punch them, and you can do silly things like slicing them up with your magic fists and throwing missiles. It's all rather funny for the first ten minutes or so, but just a bit pathetic.

Gavin Mackenzie

VERDICT

Slow, clunky, unresponsive, ugly, stupid and dated. Only get *Fist Of The North Star* if you really are obsessed with gore above anything else. Then get help.

51%

It's a bit like *Afro Samurai* but with no style, polish or class whatsoever.



RELEASE DATE: 26 NOVEMBER

Saw II: Flesh & Blood

We saw, we conquered, we never came



Publisher Konami Developer Zombie Studios Price £49.99 Players 1 Genre Action thriller Supports 1080p Age Rating 18 Website www.konami.com/games/saw2



We laughed when we watched the first *Saw* movie. Not because we're perverse, but because every horror cliché it used was

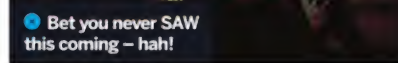
so predictable. So we didn't expect to soil our pants playing a game based on a cheesy horror flick, especially when we're veterans of scary games like *Resi* and *Dead Space*. And predictably, *Saw II* couldn't even make us gasp in surprise.

You play the role of Detective Tapp's son, Michael Tapp, who's sucked into one of Jigsaw's twisted

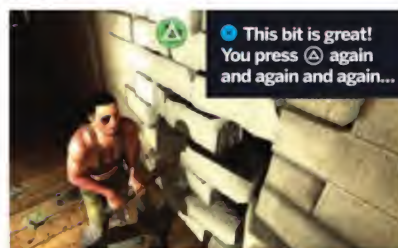
machinations as he investigates his father's death. The game's shocks bounce between making you wince as you feel the pain of Tapp's injuries and elicit a frown as botched scenes intended to horrify simply fall flat.

There's some merit in *Saw II*'s puzzles complemented by Jigsaw's enigmatic messages that will have you pondering how to escape a particular room, but most of the game is a string of QTEs and brainless button bashing to crawl through small spaces and complete physical puzzles. The really sad bit is the concept of *Saw II* – a horror game involving acts of self-mutilation and a chance for some clever lateral puzzles – is interesting, and could work in the hands of a more talented studio with more time and money. Unfortunately, *Saw II*'s low production values mean this feels more like a walk through a ghost house in a cheap theme park than a terrifying horror experience.

Ben Biggs



Bet you never SAW this coming – hah!



This bit is great! You press Δ again and again and again...

VERDICT

Horror games are supposed to be scary, but the only thing that really gives *Saw II* any credibility are some of the more interesting puzzles we encountered.

36%



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

FIFA 11

No, it's not as good as the PS3 version

DETAILS

Publisher
EA Sports
Developer
EA Canada
Price
£29.99
Players
1-2
Genre
Sports
Supports
Ad-hoc Wi-Fi
Multiplayer, TV In/Out
Age Rating
3
Website
www.ea.com/uk/football/fifa



You may have realised that we hadn't actually reviewed any of the FIFA games on PSP until this year's *World Cup* edition came about. That time in the wilderness away from Reviewsville has done... well, very little for the series. We found the *World Cup* game to be playable, but ultimately shallow and overall a bit poor. It may therefore come as no surprise that the 'full' version of *FIFA 11* on PSP is pretty much the same as that, just with less depth issues than before. If it does come as a surprise then you may well want to stay in school a bit longer, as you clearly have some issues with predicting the obvious.

The main problem on playing *FIFA* PSP for the first time comes when you expect it to be as good as the console version. Now, we don't expect it to be on par with the bigger

brother version, but we do have certain hopes for how it will turn out: smaller, just as smooth, obviously not as good-looking, enough modes to keep you occupied over many train journeys/bus rides/long flights and generally feeling like *FIFA*. *SmackDown Vs Raw* manages it on a yearly basis, and the recent *UFC* release on PSP has shown THQ is an overlooked master of making the 'not quite as good as the console version but still quite fun' handheld versions of home console titles. But *FIFA* just misses the mark.

Stilted, jerky animations are coupled with inexact, flakey controls to make a game that not only doesn't just feel like it deserves the *FIFA 11* name, but one that also feels like a football game from ten years ago. That's not

to say it's unplayable – that's simply not true. It's just lacking in far too many ways, even when compared to the *PES* series on PSP, to make it really worth it to anyone other than the obsessive.

The game does have redeeming qualities – career mode has been carried over from

The main problem comes when you expect it to be as good as the console version

the home version (pretty much in full) and is nice to have stored away for the aforementioned journeys around the world. Other than that it's pretty standard stuff, with the returning elements like the quiz section bringing little more than a brief distraction. 360-degree dribbling is also carried over, but the skittishness of the controls means this has very little impact. All in all it's no more than a half-decent package.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

Better than *FIFA World Cup* on PSP, but not a patch on the home console version of *FIFA 11*. There is enough of a draw to keep you playing, but the package is just a bit too flaky to really recommend.

69%



Or you could try

PES 2011 N/A
We haven't reviewed it yet, but we're willing to bet it's like PES 2010 on PSP. N/A%

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"Impossible to hate, but difficult to love" 78%

Putting some moose horns on your head and then slashing zombies with your makeshift hat just couldn't take place in any other game...



Dead Rising 2

A short-lived but fun experience...

DETAILS

Publisher
Capcom
Developer
Blue Castle Games
Release Date
Out Now
Price
£49.99
Players
1-4
Genre
Action adventure
Supports
720p,
Downloadable
Content, Sixaxis,
Dolby Digital 5.1,
DualShock 3

Despite a large group of gamers making their displeasure known when the original launched on the Xbox 360, *Dead Rising's* most controversial feature has returned: the save system. Deliberately designed for multiple playthroughs, if you're hoping for nothing more than a hack-'n'-slash zombie-filled adventure the narrative is not going to be something you invest much time in. Thankfully, there is another option. Following the trend of including multiplayer when a sequel is released, Capcom has decided not to disappoint.

Set up in an almost *Gladiators*-type fashion, going head-to-head with up to three friends will see you participate in some of the most insane mini-games you could imagine. The first, Ramsterball, does exactly what its name hints at. Putting you in a giant sphere, you create as much destruction as humanly possible to bring utter carnage to the moronic zombies that happen to be in the wrong place

at the wrong time. Next is Headache. Giving you the sole task of annihilating the undead's head, you gather hats, whack them on your foes' noggins and then activate a switch which turns their craniums into mush. To increase the sheer lunacy further there's Pound Of Flesh where you yourself wear a hat, adorned with moose horns, and ram zombies onto a platform with the aim of upping the weight on the scales. If you manage to survive all of that you get to participate in SliceCycles, a simple endeavour where you and your motorbike, complete with two chainsaws attached to it, run amok cutting the target into a million pieces.

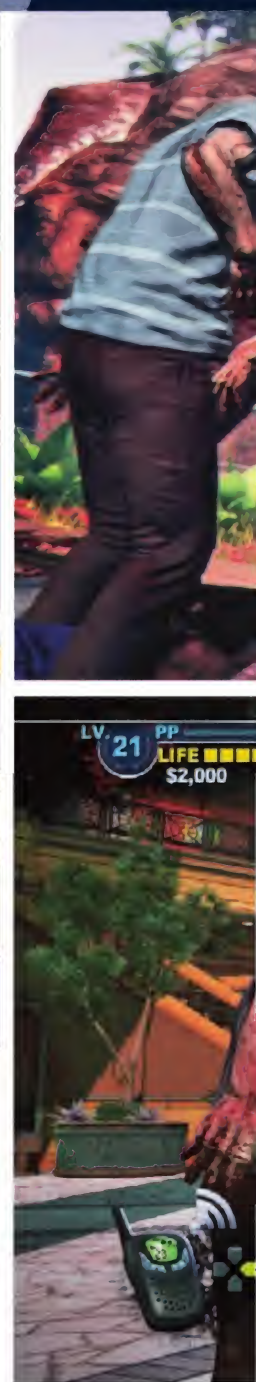
As is painfully obvious, each ties into *Dead Rising 2's* bonkers nature, and knowing that any money you earn will be transferred over to your single-player game – allowing you to boost that experience where necessary – is reason enough to get involved. Unfortunately,

none of the events are so entertaining you'll find yourself constantly going back for more. Deliberately short and somewhat shallow, they exist as more of a diversion or a way to kill a few minutes than an online mode to lose your life to. Arguably it was designed in such a fashion, but no one

Unfortunately, none of the events are so entertaining you'll find yourself constantly going back for more

should get involved with *Dead Rising 2* for the sole reason of playing it with friends.

The same is true with the co-op angle as well. Literally just inserting another Chuck into your Fortune City, you have the added bonus of now being able to slaughter even more zombies than you could before. Admittedly the host can still progress through the story – your new-found partner won't be granted



online reviews

ミナル

それはどのようによかったか。



Only in Dead Rising 2 would this screenshot be possible...



Both random players and friends can join your game meaning there's always someone wanting to play with you.

ZOMBREX 1

Chemical Dependency

Art Appreciation

Ante Up

MyBestFriend18 has sent you an invitation.

0 KILLED

with such benefits – but this is clearly just another way to extend the package than an attempt to shake up what people expect from *Dead Rising 2*.

There's little doubt that what Blue Castle has included for the community is fun but it's trivial at best. Certainly no bad thing, mind, as toying around with it always promotes some laughs. Just don't expect to be coming back to it as you would, say, a *Call Of Duty*...

Simon Miller

VERDICT

Dead Rising 2's multiplayer component won't have you hooked for hours but will entertain you for as long as you can stand it. More of a spike of fun than a long one, it does give the game a much-needed sense of variety.

★★★★★

I GET BY ...

With a little help from my friend

WE ASSUME FOR many the real appeal of heading onto the PSN will be to play *Dead Rising* in co-op with a friend. Enabling you to both go crazy with a chainsaw and kill hundreds of zombies or take a more cerebral and structured approach, it adds a nice twist to proceedings. To encourage this play further, Blue Castle has ensured that all items and experience earned when playing together is kept for both characters. The two Chucks can even separate should they wish. With an icon keeping you up to date on what the other is doing you can become your buddy's guardian and revive your almost fallen foe should you choose to. Undoubtedly a smart addition to the experience, it shows that should *Dead Rising 3* ever emerge, a total, co-op-focused adventure would, potentially, be the direction to head in.

PSN Roundup

FIFA 11

The EA Sports online machine continues its forward march

Publisher EA Developer EA Canada Price £49.99 Players 1-22 Genre Sports

Much in the same vein as other EA Sports games currently unleashing themselves in 2011, *FIFA 11's* online game hasn't actually taken many steps forward this year. Thanks to the incredible base it already had what's here is still excellent, and the addition of new leaderboards, allowing you to compare your achievements to others online, improves the idea of community. Really, though, the major addition here is *FIFA 11's* ability to boast its place as the first football game to have 11-on-11 matches. Although it's hard to find someone to play as the goalkeeper, if you have enough PSN



friends to get a full lineup it's quite the experience. With the always-addictive exhibition games, and all the refined tweaks thrown in, *FIFA* continues to be as good online as it is off. SM ★★★★★

NHL 11

The most consistent sports game on the market retains its title

Publisher EA Developer EA Canada Price £49.99 Players 1-12 Genre Sports

If you're a big ice hockey fan, the reliability of EA's franchise is a constant pleasure to behold. Constantly tweaked and more realistic elements included, *NHL 11* even gives you the option to swap your stick if it breaks. As for online, the experience is incredibly deep, mainly thanks to the EA Sports Ultimate Hockey League. Giving you all the tools that a real-life General Manager would have, the amount of areas you can take charge of is insane, giving you total control over your team. EA bills it as the biggest online dynasty ever and we're inclined to agree – the scope is huge.



Much like *FIFA*, fans of the series won't see any massive changes, but what's here is still more than enough to keep you going all year. SM ★★★★★

F1 2010

The real reason to play?

Publisher Codemasters Developer Codemasters Price £49.99 Players 1-24 Genre Sports

As good as *F1 2010's* single-player is its many problems have been noted, with a patch from Codemasters already on the way. Thankfully, even without this, online is the place to head to get the most out of the latest Formula 1 game. As well as the expected modes – a grand prix, endurance races, sprints and specific qualification challenges – XP is given for being successful and achieving that always coveted podium finish. Creating the desire to level-up, as all ranking systems seem to do, it adds a nice touch to an already well-put-together PSN option – there's always the desire to



increase your position by just one more place. Fun against random opponents and a riot when battling it out with friends, you'd be mad not to take *F1 2010* onto the PSN. SM ★★★★★



Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light

GAME

Lara Croft's best PS3 adventure yet? Hell yes

Publisher
Square Enix
Developer
Crystal Dynamics
Release Date
Out Now
Price
£9.99
Players
1-2
Genre
Adventure

As enjoyable as *Tomb Raider: Underworld* was, it was becoming increasingly obvious that the series needed a reboot. While we patiently wait for that to happen, Crystal Dynamics has instead turned its hand to the digital market, and in doing so has created one of the best *Tomb Raider* games to date.

Don't be fooled by the new title and isometric viewpoint, because this is still classic *Tomb Raider*, albeit classic *Tomb Raider* with a lot more shooting. There are still puzzles to solve, large tombs to explore and enemies a plenty to destroy, but somehow, even on the digital platform, it all seems so much grander.

This in part is due to the truly stunning world that Crystal Dynamics has created. Utilising the same engine that has worked so well in past *Tomb Raider* games, this looks absolutely stunning on PSN thanks to incredible lighting, huge luscious

environments and impossibly slick animation. It's also backed up by a truly gripping orchestral score and the return of Keeley Hawes, meaning it sounds as good as it looks.

While Crystal Dynamics has created one of the best-looking games on PSN, it's the finely crafted gameplay that impresses us the most. The huge game – there's a good eight hours of initial play here – is split up into several levels and Lara must make her way through tombs that are swarming with enemies. Objectives are given at the start of each stage and range from destroying a set amount of trucks to collecting red skulls and further unlockables can be earned by completing the puzzles found in certain tombs.

Armed with her trusty grappling hook, Lara is able to scale certain areas, use a spear to reach other out of the way places

and blast away a variety of monsters with her twin pistols. While firing uses the traditional twin-stick method, Lara can also plant bombs or simply crush enemies with the huge stone balls that are found on certain

The best game Lara's featured in for years. Miss it at your peril

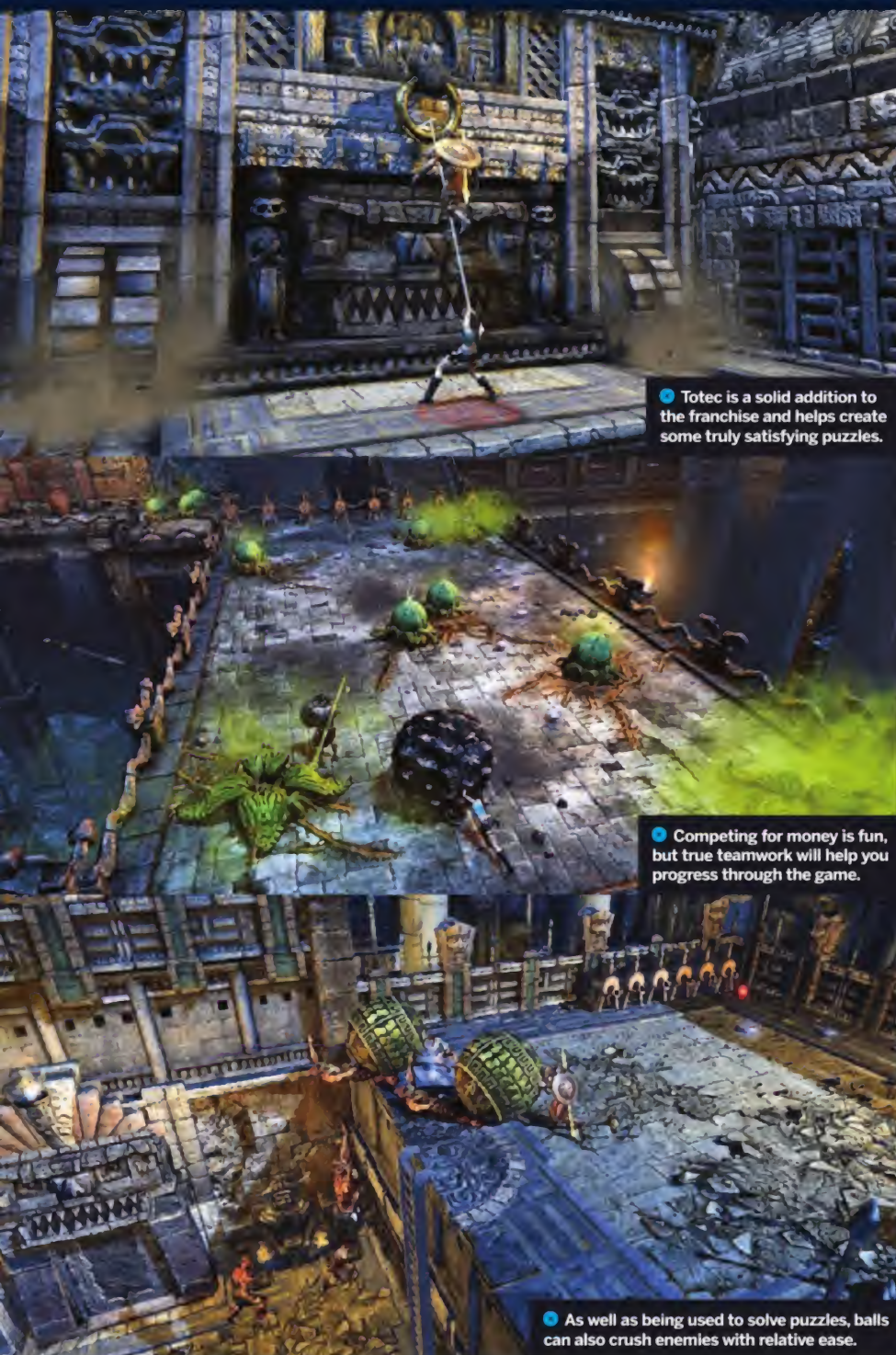
stages. It's a healthy mix of arcade-style blasting and old-school exploration and it works far better than we were expecting it to.

And yet that's not the end of it, for the real draw of *Lara Croft And The Guardian Light* is its impressive new co-op mode, which is playable either online or off. Taking control of either Lara or a 2,000-year-old Mayan warrior named Totec you quickly discover that the puzzles you solved on your own have to be tackled in a completely different way, effectively making this two games in

Store Reviews

それはどのようによかったか。

Store Roundup



● Totec is a solid addition to the franchise and helps create some truly satisfying puzzles.

● Competing for money is fun, but true teamwork will help you progress through the game.

● As well as being used to solve puzzles, balls can also crush enemies with relative ease.

one. Totec has a shield that can be used to either protect him from projectiles or as a perch for Lara to climb on, while he's able to run across Lara's grappling hook to reach out-of-the-way places. It adds immeasurably to the core gameplay and adds a solid streak of competitiveness as you both seek out the money that litters each level.

It might not say *Tomb Raider* in the title, but that doesn't stop it from being the best game Lara's featured in for years. Miss it at your peril.

Darran Jones

VERDICT

We hoped that Crystal Dynamics would deliver a quality digital release, but we're still stunned by the scope and ambition Lara's new game boasts. A superb game that every Lara fan needs to own.

90%



CRITTER CONTROL

Lara versus nature

ONE OF THE key elements of the original *Tomb Raider* was the amount of beasts that Lara had to battle. It's no different in *Guardian Of Light*, with our heroine battling both natural and supernatural fiends. Giant spiders and lizards are just a few of the things you have to tangle with, but as the game progresses you'll come up against deadlier foes. Fortunately you'll have plenty of weapons and can also use the environments to your advantage.

TUMBLE GAME

Build huge towers without the effort

Publisher Sony Computer Entertainment
Developer In-House Release Date Out Now Price £7.99 Players 1-2 Genre Puzzle

TUMBLE, LIKE MANY of Move's first few releases, is all about the tech



rather than the game. It's put to stunning effect here with you thrusting and pulling your controller into all kinds of positions in order to build tall towers. While building itself is fun, there's not enough variety to hold your attention. Many of the included modes are quite simplistic and the only real challenge is in constructing as tall a tower as possible. It's a shame that the gameplay is so linear because the tech truly is astounding.

70%

WORMS 2: ARMAGEDDON GAME

Better late than never

Publisher Team17 Software Developer In-House Release Date Out Now Price £11.99 Players 1-4 Genre Strategy

WORMS 2 HAS finally hit PSN but despite its funky new level editor and



Sony-related extras it leaves us with a slightly bittersweet taste in our mouths.

There's no denying that it's still an amazing strategy game and there are plenty of new weapons to enjoy, but it does gall us that we're expected to shell out all this cash for something which is under half the price on XBLA. However, it's still a fantastic game and an absolute riot in multiplayer.

87%

TOP GUN GAME

Won't take your breath away

Publisher Paramount Digital Developer In-House Release Date Out Now Price £7.99 Players 1 (2-16 online) Genre Arcade

IF AFTER BURNER

Climax didn't exist this would feel half decent.



Featuring the characters from the film and that awesome music, *Top Gun* is a weird mesh of *H.A.W.X.* and Sega's superb *After Burner* that falls short of both.

We've no problem with *Top Gun*'s short length but we do have a problem with the dull gameplay and uninspiring visuals. The multiplayer is admittedly good fun but it still doesn't justify *Top Gun*'s steep asking price. Stick with *After Burner Climax* instead.

53%

RED DEAD REDEMPTION: LIARS & CHEATS PACK DLC

Rockstar gets back in the saddle

Publisher Rockstar Games Developer Rockstar San Diego Release Date Out Now Price £7.99 Players 2-16 Genre Sandbox

THIS IS MORE like it. This latest expansion has 15 new characters



from the core game, a cool new explosive rifle, while new hunting grounds have been filled with lots of vicious animals. The best additions, however, are Grand Prix – race horses and shoot down opponents you can't beat – and Stronghold that sees you split into two teams of four players with the aim of defending or attacking specific objectives. It's a superb piece of DLC that shouldn't be missed. ★★★★★

SONIC ADVENTURE GAME

How the mighty have fallen

Publisher Sega Europe Developer Sonic Team Release Date Out Now Price £6.29 Players 1 Genre Adventure

SONIC ADVENTURE WAS one of Sega's big hitters against



the incoming PS2. It's rather ironic then that the 12-year-old game is now getting a second lease of life on Sony's follow-up console, while Sega's hardware long since crashed and burned. However, annoying pop-up, twitchy controls and an unsteady camera ensure that *Sonic Adventure* feels incredibly old hat now. The action stages are still great fun, but there's no denying that it is no longer the game it once was. What a pity.

63%

FLIGHT CONTROL HD GAME

Flying high

Publisher NDWARE PTY Developer Firemint Release Date Out Now Price £7.99 Players 1-4 Genre Arcade

WE DIDN'T EXPECT much from this iPhone port but



Flight Control HD works brilliantly with Move. The aim is to direct incoming planes to available runways without them crashing. It sounds simple, and is, thanks to the ability to draw stunningly accurate flight paths – but it soon descends into utter chaos as more and more aircraft appear on screen.

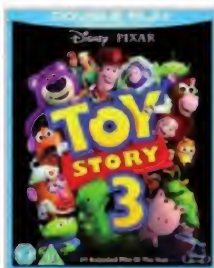
Longevity is assured thanks to a variety of maps and plans to land and only the fact that stages can take a while to get going lets it down.

85%

● All the old faces are present and there's also a smattering of new ones.



● Toy Story 3 is yet another gorgeous-looking Pixar Blu-ray.



Toy Story 3

The toys are back in town... Again...

DETAILS

Price
£22.99
Sound
DTS-HD Master
Audio 7.1
Director
Lee Unkrich
Starring
Tom Hanks, Tim
Allen, Ned Beatty

When the *Toy Story 3* trailer first hit it appeared that Pixar had finally sold out its core values of always putting story before money. Dull and clichéd and introducing a load of new characters who appeared to be there for no other reason than their commercial appeal, it seemed that the *Toy Story* train was finally running out of steam.

Well, as much as it pains us to admit it, we were wrong, for Woody and Buzz's third outing is phenomenal. Expertly paced, beautifully written and with some excellent characters, it proves once again that even when it's

Andy hasn't abandoned them, decide they'd rather be somewhere where they can be played with forever.

It's not long before Buzz and co realise that all is not as it seems and it's down to Woody to mount a rescue and get everyone home.

Toy Story 3 works so well because the creators and cast have lived and breathed these characters for the past 15 years and it really shows. As a result the dialogue flows wonderfully throughout, while the CGI power behind the scenes further brings these characters to life. While the focus remains on Woody and Buzz, Pixar hasn't forgotten its co-stars and the likes of Rex, Mr and Mrs Potato Head and Hamm get plenty

of one-liners. Equally amazing, however, is the fact that all the new characters are well fleshed out with Michael Keaton's slimy Ken and Ned Beatty as the sinister Lots-O'-Huggin' Bear proving particularly memorable.

This is also a surprisingly dark story, with many sequences being incredibly frightening, more so when you consider the audience that *Toy Story 3* is aimed at. Themes of loss and regret run heavy throughout and while

the final sequences will no doubt feel a little saccharin, they nevertheless manage to pack a surprisingly emotional punch – further testament to just how far Pixar has come in the last 15 years.

A film of *Toy Story 3*'s stature deserves a stunning Blu-ray and as usual Disney delivers in spades. Picture quality is just as you'd expect from a brand-new CGI release and there's a truly ridiculous amount of features ranging from commentaries, to Picture-in-Picture goodness. It's getting something of a cliché when talking about Disney discs, but the studio really is in a league of its own when it comes to producing stunning Blu-rays. *Toy Story 3* is yet further proof of this and a film that everybody should have in their collection.

Darran Jones

VERDICT

It treads old ground but this is still a stunning film and possibly the best *Toy Story* ever made. Add in a great Blu-ray and this becomes an essential purchase.

RATING: ★★★★★

Woody and Buzz's third outing is expertly paced and beautifully written

retreading old ideas, nobody – and we mean nobody – does computer animation like Pixar.

The story here is familiar as it's pretty much a retread of *Toy Story 2*. Andy is now grown-up and heading to college. With only Woody going with him, the rest of the toys are to go into the loft so that they might be enjoyed by his future children. Disaster strikes, though, when the toys are accidentally sent to a children's home and, despite assuredness from Woody that

Plus all
the latest
hardware
reviews

Blu-ray Reviews

それはどのようによかったですか。

Competition

Back To The Future Trilogy

PRICE £49.99

SOUND DTS-HD Master
Audio 5.1

DIRECTOR Robert Zemeckis

STARRING Michael J Fox,
Christopher Lloyd, Elisabeth Shue



BLU-RAY COLLECTIONS ARE literally appearing everywhere at the moment, but if you get any be sure to get this superb set. With a brilliant transfer that looks like the films were made yesterday and some incredible extras, this is a truly lavish boxset that any fan of the series will adore. Don't miss it. **DJ**

RATING: ★★★★★

Star Wars™: The Clone Wars™: The Complete Season Two

PRICE £49.99

SOUND DTS-HD MA 5.1

DIRECTOR Dave Filoni

STARRING Matt Lanter, James Arnold Taylor, Dee Bradley Baker, Ashley Eckstein



IGNORE THAT THIS is aimed at younger *Star Wars*™ fans and revel in the fact that the franchise is still great fun. This second 22-part season continues to focus on Anakin, but also has a high bounty hunter count. A great transfer with some decent extras. **DJ**

RATING: ★★★★★

Predators

PRICE £24.99

SOUND DTS-HD Master
Audio 5.1 Surround

DIRECTOR Nimród Antal

STARRING Adrien Brody,
Topher Grace, Danny Trejo



IF YOU CAN get past the tired dialogue, and predictable action scenes you'll find this long-awaited Predator sequel surprisingly good fun. The cast are obviously in on the joke while there are also some surprisingly gory deaths to enjoy. Pure popcorn fodder, but we can't help wondering what would have happened if Robert Rodriguez had directed it. **DJ**

RATING: ★★★★★

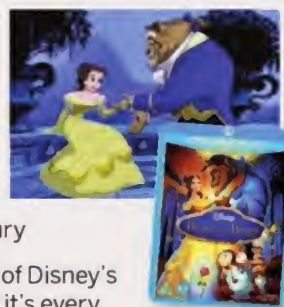
Beauty And The Beast

PRICE £22.99

SOUND Dolby TrueHD 5.1

DIRECTORS Gary Trousdale/Kirk Wise

STARRING Paige O'Hara,
Robby Benson, Angela Lansbury



ONE OF THE last and greatest of Disney's 2D films finally hits Blu-ray and it's every bit as good as you'd expect. There's a wealth of extras to scour through and an incredible transfer to enjoy. Great songs, gorgeous animation and fun performances all add up to create one of the true greats. Fantastic stuff. **DJ**

RATING: ★★★★★

Get Him To The Greek

PRICE £24.99

SOUND DTS-HD MA 5.1

DIRECTOR Nicholas Stoller

STARRING Russell Brand,
Jonah Hill, Colm Meaney



WE'RE NOT SURE what's more amazing; the fact that Russell Brand can carry a film or that this spin-off of *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* got the go-ahead. Nevertheless, it's here and it's a typically bawdy romp with Brand on fine form. It's ending is fairly predictable, but *Hangover* fans will still no doubt call it the best comedy in years. **DJ**

RATING: ★★★★★

Doctor Who: The Complete Fifth Series

PRICE £79.99

SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1

DIRECTOR Various

STARRING Matt Smith,
Karen Gillan, Toby Jones



MATT SMITH EFFORTLESSLY steps into the big shoes of David Tennant and becomes our favourite doctor to date. Producer Steven Moffat turns the darkness and sassiness up and creates a surprisingly good run of episodes. Gillan excels as the sexy new companion, but this is Smith's hour. **DJ**

RATING: ★★★★★

Win Star Wars™: The Clone Wars™ The Complete Season Two on Blu-ray™

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER GEORGE Lucas and Lucasfilm Animation present *Star Wars*™: *The Clone Wars*™ *The Complete Season Two* on Blu-ray. As the fight for peace plunges further into the galaxy, the heroic Jedi are faced with all-new dangers! Never-before-seen creatures pose new threats and create further chaos during the intensifying Clone Wars. Adding to the turmoil, bounty hunter Cad Bane steals valuable Jedi secrets, a mind-controlling queen creates an indestructible army, the giant Zillo Beast terrorises Coruscant, and a young Boba Fett seeks out revenge! With fierce battles, expanded storylines and groundbreaking animation, this is a *Star Wars*™ adventure that is bigger, bolder and more intense than ever before! We have five copies to give away, so to be in with a chance of seeing it all unfold in high definition simply answer this *Star Wars*™ question:

How many Lightsabers does Asajj Ventress use?

- a) One
- b) Two
- c) Three



Star Wars™: *The Clone Wars*™: *The Complete Season Two* which is out on Blu-ray and DVD from 25 October.

Terms And Conditions

To submit your answer, simply email play@imagine-publishing.co.uk with the subject line 'Clone Wars competition' plus your name, address and contact details. The closing date for entries is 25 November 2010. Please be aware that answers must be submitted to the above email address only.

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HD Reviews

TVs and media systems that'll make your home entertainment come to life



Panasonic SC-BT230EB-K

Price £310

Dimensions 430 x 287 x 54mm

IF YOU'RE AFTER a complete Blu-ray cinema setup, this offering from Panasonic is extremely well priced. In addition to offering a fantastic picture, this player comes with 5.1 channel sound, an integrated dock for an iPod and an SD and USB port. ★★★★★



Sony BDVE370.CEK 5.1

Price £295

Dimensions 440 x 300 x 45mm

SONY'S LATEST ALL-IN-ONE feature package is 3D compatible, gives you access to YouTube and iPlayer, and features a 5.1 surround setup that delivers 850W of power. It's updatable and is a perfectly commendable home-theatre setup for its sub-£300 asking price. ★★★★★



LG HB405SU 5.1

Price £108

Dimensions 430 x 62.5 x 281mm

WHILE A LITTLE basic compared to its peers, the LG HB405SU 5.1 remains a decent enough setup for enthusiasts on a budget. The small speakers look funky, but don't really give out too much power (400W total). ★★★★★

PLAY# PlayList

If you want to know what a game scored then these pages are for you

GUILTY PLEASURES NBA Street Homecourt

PS3 • EA Sports BIG •
Play 151 • 68%

RELEASED AT THE same time as the PlayStation 3 in the UK, *NBA Street Homecourt* marked – at least what appears to be – the final entry to the *NBA Street* franchise. And, well, we didn't think all that much of it back in the day, citing unfair AI and a general feel of disconnection between the player and their tiny digital hoop-slinger. Is hoop-slinger a term that refers to basketball players? Well, it is now.



Obviously we stand by our verdict, but even the review admitted there is fun to be had with *Homecourt*. It would seem that these days that's even more true than ever, with the complete lack of EA Sports BIG games on the horizon making us nostalgic for simpler, yet more over-the-top times. Ridiculous dunks from halfway across the court, 32 tricks before netting a long-ranger, Herbie Hancock's *Rockit*



playing multiple times per game – *Homecourt* can be a lot of fun when it wants to be.

Sure, it still has the depth of a teaspoon and, yes, the AI can still be a bit of a berk. Tricking isn't as smooth or intuitive as it should be, and that's another area where you always feel the computer is being cheap. But if you just play the game against other people, and as long as you can overlook a fair few shortcomings, *NBA Street Homecourt* is still a fun, daft sports game – the likes of which we rarely see these days. Plus – come on – that soundtrack is brilliant.

PS3 LISTING



game	issue	score
3D Collection	195	75%
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	87%
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Afro Samurai	177	61%
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Alpha Protocol	193	83%
Aliens Vs Predator	189	79%
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Armored Core For Answer	173	65%
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	65%
Ashes Cricket 2009	183	30%
Assassin's Creed	161	58%
Assassin's Creed II	186	89%
Backbreaker	193	70%
Band Hero	187	68%
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	93%
Single-player is fairly impressive but take it online and it's bordering on genius. This is quite possibly the best shooter on PS3 today.		
Bayonetta*	187	93%
The most over-the-top, inventive, consistently thrilling, overtly sexual, guiltily enjoyable Japanese action game we've played in years.		
Beijing 2008	168	54%
Beowulf	161	61%
Bionic Commando	179	82%
BioShock	172	93%
This FPS-adventure hybrid has been admirably translated to the PS3. The most atmospheric game of our time.		
BioShock 2	189	88%
BlackSite	163	43%
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	58%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	85%
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blur	193	86%
Borderlands	185	80%
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	185	79%
Burnout Paradise	162	74%
Buzz!: Quiz TV	168	82%
Buzz! Quiz World	185	70%
Call Of Duty 3	151	77%
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	68%
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	88%
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	85%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	85%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	87%
Civilization Revolution	168	90%
The popular PC series makes its way to the PS3, so you can while away your hours playing this instead of doing important things.		
Clash Of The Titans	193	65%
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	91%
Quite simply the second-best rally game on the PS3. Still, if simulation is what you're after then go for this over <i>Sega Rally</i> .		
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	87%

game	issue	score
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Conan	160	71%
Condemned 2	165	78%
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Cross Edge	182	59%
Damnation	181	38%
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	188	83%
Dead Rising 2	197	78%
Dead Space	172	87%
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	68%
Demon's Souls	193	92%
As good as it was when we reviewed it on import, but with a better translation and it's also available here. One of PS3's best games.		
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	178	29%
Devil May Cry 4	163	89%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	81%
DJ Hero	186	91%
It's just like playing <i>Guitar Hero</i> for the first time all over again, although <i>DJ Hero</i> is slightly more expensive.		
Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	61%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam	160	40%
Dynasty Warriors Gundam 2	176	43%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	189	37%
Dynasty Warriors 6	164	30%
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	44%
Eat Lead	178	38%
Enchanted Arms	152	69%
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	83%
Eternal Sonata	176	87%
Everybody's Golf 5*	158	88%
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	91%
The most recent <i>Tiger Woods</i> game may have been rubbish, but don't worry because <i>Everybody's Golf</i> is bloody brilliant.		
Eye Of Judgment	159	65%
EyePet	185	83%
EyePet: Move	197	84%
F1 2010	197	86%
FaceBreaker	170	55%
Fairytale Fights	186	51%
Fallout 3	173	97%
Fallout 3 lives up to its promise and then some. It's a damning portrayal of the consequences of war, and a compelling RPG experience.		
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	172	74%
F.E.A.R.	151	81%
F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin	176	87%
FIFA 08	159	84%
FIFA 09	171	87%
FIFA 10	184	90%
The best football game made marginally better. The crown held by <i>PES</i> seems like so long ago now.		
FIFA 11	197	91%
FIFA continues to improve and continues to dominate with this latest addition to the superior footy franchise.		
FIFA Street 3	163	66%
FIFA World Cup 2010	192	70%
Fight Night Round 3	151	87%
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIII	190	85%

game	issue	score
Folklore	158	66%
Formula One Championship Edition	151	72%
Fracture	171	72%
Fuel	180	49%
Full Auto 2: Battlines	151	69%
G-Force	183	59%
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	38%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	183	22%
God Of War Collection*	188	93%
Two of the greatest PS2 action games of all time come together at a bargain price. Essential purchase.		
God Of War III	190	88%
Gran Turismo 5 Prologue	165	75%
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	98%
If you haven't already bought it, then stop reading this box, put your shoes on and go out and get it! The best game ever? Probably.		
Green Day: Rock Band	194	77%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	94%
Two fine expansions bundled together and without the need for <i>GTA IV</i> to play them. What more could you want.		
Guitar Hero III	160	90%
<i>Guitar Hero III</i> is another great rhythm-action beast, sure to delight fans and newcomers alike. So, grab a guitar and rock out!		
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	168	63%
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	88%
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	71%
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	95%
<i>World Tour</i> just about manages to trump rival <i>Rock Band</i> with its entertaining music-creation tools, and quality peripherals.		
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	60%
Harry Potter: The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	167	64%
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
Heavy Rain	189	94%
It will certainly split opinion, but we absolutely love it. A valuable addition to the wonderful world of gaming.		
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%
Ice Age 3: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs	182	47%
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	183	72%
inFamous	180	81%
International Cricket 2010	194	61%
Iron Man	166	58%
Iron Man 2	193	50%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	64%
John Daly's ProStroke Golf	197	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Just Cause 2	190	87%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	73%
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	71%
Katamari Forever	184	88%
Killzone 2	176	93%
Sony has proven that it has a PlayStation platform capable of supporting a truly world-class FPS. Best graphics ever.		
Kung Fu Rider	196	65%
Lair	158	52%
Last Rebellion	191	42%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	54%
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	173	65%

This month's new entries

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

Vanquish PS3	93%	R.U.S.E. PS3	82%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West PS3	83%	EyePet: Move PS3	84%
FIFA 11 PS3	91%	WRC: FIA World Rally Championship PS3	76%
PES 2011 PS3	73%	John Daly's ProStroke Golf PS3	70%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow PS3	85%	UFC Undisputed 2010 PSP	80%
Dead Rising 2 PS3	78%	Blade Kitten PSN	72%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions PS3	69%	Scott Pilgrim Vs The World PSN	77%
Quantum Theory PS3	29%	Shank PSN	86%
F1 2010 PS3	86%	Gundemonium Collection PSN	80%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock PS3	71%		

game	issue	score
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	79%
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	73%
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	76%
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
LittleBigPlanet	172	94%
Create, share and play. Sackboy heads up Media Molecule's highly customisable and adorable platformer		
Lost Planet 2	192	75%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	69%
Lost: The Video Game	164	38%
LOTR: Conquest	175	52%
Madden NFL 07	151	82%
Madden NFL 08	157	82%
Madden NFL 09	170	83%
Madden NFL 10	184	82%
Madden NFL 11	196	84%
Mafia II	196	81%
MAG	189	68%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	57%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	85%
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	78%
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	92%
Not the final <i>Metal Gear Solid</i> game after all then. Still brilliant though, and still largely incomprehensible.		
Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire	151	37%
Modern Warfare 2	186	94%
A questionable single-player mode is rendered null and void by the best multiplayer we've ever played.		
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	173	71%
ModNation Racers	192	90%
The best kart racer by far on the PlayStation 3, but combined with incredible levels of creativity. If you love <i>LBP</i> you'll love this, too.		
Monster Madness	170	78%
Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe	173	68%
MotoGP 08	172	65%
MotoGP 09/10	190	77%
MotorStorm	151	92%
With the addition of an online multiplayer, <i>MotorStorm</i> gets the score it deserves, and currently leads the lines for the next gen.		
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	93%
With its balls strapped firmly to the wall, <i>Pacific Rift</i> amplifies the drama of the original to create the PS3's best racing title.		
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX Vs ATV Untamed	164	58%
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
NASCAR 08	157	38%
Naughty Bear	195	64%
NBA 07	153	33%
NBA 2K7	151	76%
NBA 2K8	172	71%
NBA 2K10	186	79%
NBA Live 08	158	59%
NBA Live 09	170	81%
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	68%
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	86%
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
Nier	192	54%
NHL 2K7	151	80%
NHL 2K9	172	67%

game	issue	score
NHL 2K10	186	70%
NHL 09	170	88%
NHL 10	184	85%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	88%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Overlord: Raising Hell	167	65%
Overlord II	181	68%
Pain	183	69%
PES 2008	159	70%
PES 2009	172	80%
PES 2010	185	72%
PES 2011	197	73%
PixelJunk Racers	160	74%
POTC: At World's End	154	48%
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	181	76%
Pure	171	80%
Pure Football	194	69%
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%
Quantum Theory	197	29%
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	88%
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	82%
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
Red Dead Redemption	193	92%
Relocates the familiar <i>GTA</i> formula to a superbly realised new setting and, in many ways, is unlike anything else as a result.		
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	80%
Resident Evil 5	177	86%
Resident Evil 5: Gold Edition	190	86%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	83%
Resistance 2	173	90%
With its impressive set pieces and glorious multiplayer mode, <i>Resistance 2</i> is one of the best FPSs on the PS3.		
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	58%
Rock Band	169	94%
<i>Rock Band</i> could be the best rhythm-action game ever. Especially if you're playing with a group of friends. Even better after a few beers.		
Rock Band 2	179	96%
With the incredible tracklist, tweaked engine, and new modes, this is easily the best rhythm-action game currently available.		
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
R.U.S.E.	197	82%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	76%
Saints Row 2	172	79%
Saw	186	52%
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
SBK 08	172	55%
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
Sega Rally	158	92%
Simply the best rally game on the PS3. Unless simulation is your bag then you'll want to go for <i>Colin McRae</i> . Not much in it, really.		
Sega Superstars Tennis	165	68%
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	177	32%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	64%
Simpsons Game	160	82%
SingStar	159	80%
SingStar Pop Edition	179	81%
Singularity	195	80%
Skate	159	86%
Skate 2	175	82%

game	issue	score
Skate 3	192	86%
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	52%
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
Soul Calibur IV	169	94%
Even the gimmicky appearance of Darth Vader can't spoil <i>Soul Calibur IV</i> . Another wonderful addition to the franchise		
Spider-Man 3	155	33%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	69%
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	79%
Split/Second: Velocity	192	90%
Just beating <i>Blur</i> to the chequered flag, <i>Split/Second</i> is a wonderfully intense racing game in the <i>Burnout</i> mould		
Sports Champions	196	83%
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	65%
Start The Party!	196	72%
Stormrise	178	51%
Stranglehold	159	65%
Street Fighter IV	176	95%
The best beat-'em-up on the PS3, probably the best beat-'em-up ever, and maybe even the best game ever. Our poor little thumbs.		
Stuntman: Ignition	157	82%
SuperCar Challenge	183	66%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	55%
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%
Super Street Fighter IV	191	90%
The fact that you're buying a lot of stuff you've probably bought already is the only drawback to what is the best fighter ever made.		
Tekken 6	184	94%
There are flaws that hurt the experience, but nothing, <i>nothing</i> , stops <i>Tekken 6</i> from being an intense, tactical and brilliant fighting game.		
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	96%
It's a gorgeous game that'll make Beatles fans feel like they're being swaddled in a veil of pure joy. A breathtaking product		
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
The Club	163	80%
The Darkness	154	91%
This unique FPS combines the best bits of <i>Mafia</i> and war films along with some highly innovative gameplay elements.		
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	91%
This proves once and for all that Western RPGs are better than Japanese ones! Sort of. Whatever, <i>Oblivion</i> is an awesome game.		
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	178	38%
The Golden Compass	162	32%
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%
The Orange Box	161	93%
Five brilliant games for the price of one, what on Earth could be better than that? Nothing, that's what. <i>Absolutely nothing</i>		
The Saboteur	187	67%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	151	88%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08	158	73%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09	171	86%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	181	69%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11	194	60%
Time Crisis 4	166	69%
TimeShift	162	72%
TNA Impact!	171	71%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	80%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X	177	75%

*denotes import review

GAMING CLICHES & VIDEOGAME LOGIC



Helicopters are death traps

AS SOON AS you step foot on a helicopter in a videogame your mind should be full of dread. If there's one thing the world of gaming has taught us, it's that choppers are not the safest things around. In fact, they're actually the most



dangerous things in the world. Don't believe us? Read on.

Think back to the last time you saw a game involving a helicopter that didn't crash, or wasn't attacked in some way. You can't remember one, can you? *Medal Of Honor* is the most recent example, and we can't actually think of a single chopper in the game



that doesn't get bust up by a naughty RPG.

Resi 4 had the famous Mike incident, where the friendly gunship pilot was shot down and killed just after he'd agreed to go for a drink with Leon. Then there's player ineptitude causing catastrophic chopper failure, like in the many times during *GTA* you will have tried – and failed – to land.



All the evidence points to one very clear outcome: game developers have decided that, in the case of videogames, helicopters aren't to be trusted. If you ride in one, or see somebody flying one, there is a 78 per cent chance they will be attacked, crash or otherwise killed in action. That's not just cliché: it's fact.

GAME UNDER

Stock photography, fictitious stories, real lives...

One day



Suddenly



Then



Soon



game	issue	score
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2	196	69%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	83%
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	72%
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	52%
Top Spin 3	168	71%
Tornado Outbreak	186	56%
Toy Story 3	195	82%
Transformers: Revenge Of The Fallen	182	41%
Transformers: The Game	156	34%
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	80%
Trinity Universe	194	61%
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	40%
Turok	163	46%
UEFA EURO 2008	165	62%

UFC Undisputed 2009 180 90%

Undisputed is gorgeous to look at, it's incredibly deep, and it's one of the most addictive fighters we've played in ages.

UFC Undisputed 2010 193 88%

Uncharted: Drake's Fortune 161 87%

Uncharted 2: Among Thieves 185 96%

Among Thieves has proven itself to be a real work of class. It's one of the best games in recent years.

Unreal Tournament III 162 88%

Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom 151 54%

Valkyria Chronicles 173 82%

Vancouver 2010 189 76%

Vanquish 197 93%

A brilliant surprise from the developer of Bayonetta and easily one of the best games we've played in 2010.

Viking: Battle For Asgard 165 74%

Virtua Fighter 5 151 83%

Virtua Tennis 2009 180 80%

Virtua Tennis 3 150 91%

Pick-up-and-play gameplay strikes another blow, proving that the PS3 is currently at its best when it keeps it simple.

Wanted: Weapons Of Fate 179 63%

Warhawk 157 84%

Watchmen: The End Is Nigh 183 55%

Way Of The Samurai 3 190 16%

Wet 184 41%

Wheelman 178 72%

Where The Wild Things Are 188 56%

White Knight Chronicles 190 55%

Wolfenstein 183 72%

World Snooker Championship 2007 151 56%

WRC: FIA World Rally Championship 197 76%

WSC REAL 09: World Snooker Championship 177 67%

WWE Legends Of Wrestlemania 178 80%

WWE SmackDown Vs. Raw 2008 159 88%

WWE SmackDown Vs. Raw 2009 173 74%

WWE SmackDown Vs. Raw 2010 185 77%

X-Blades 178 54%

X-Men Origins: Wolverine 179 71%

Yakuza 3 191 80%

Yakuza 4* 193 75%

PS STORE LISTING



1942: Joint Strike 170 74%

3-On-3 NHL Arcade 177 62%

After Burner Climax 193 91%

Classic, frantic and utterly brilliant arcade action from Sega. A fine example of what the company is best known for.

Age Of Booty 172 81%

Alien Breed: Impact 196 80%

Anarchy: Rush Hour 194 73%

Aqua Panic 193 68%

Battlefield 1943 182 89%

Bishi Bashi Special! 175 61%

Bionic Commando Rearmed 169 88%

Blade Kitten 197 72%

Blast Factor 152 72%

game	issue	score
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode I	188	65%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode II	188	61%
Blue Toad Murder Files Episodes 4/5/6	193	70%
Bomberman Ultra	185	82%

Braid 188 93%

We had to wait quite a while, but time is what we have plenty of both with and for Braid. Simply brilliant.

Burn Zombie Burn 178 85%

Call Of Duty Classic 188 90%

It doesn't have MW2's polish but it's a great game both as a slice of history and in its own right.

Calling All Cars 155 81%

Catan 195 85%

Comet Crash 186 84%

Command & Conquer: Red Alert 168 70%

Command & Conquer Red Alert: Retaliation 176 55%

Command & Conquer Red Alert 3: Commander's Challenge 185 68%

Command & Conquer 175 44%

Cool Boarders 173 57%

Cool Boarders 2 175 31%

Crash Bandicoot 172 77%

Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped 174 82%

Crash Commando 174 80%

Crash Team Racing 170 79%

Critter Crunch 188 91%

This is yet another beautiful, cute and high-class puzzler on the PSN that works perfectly and is a joy to play.

Crystal Defenders 184 48%

Dark Mist 164 53%

DeathSpank 195 83%

Destruction Derby 01 80%

.detuned 186 50%

Digger HD 186 52%

Diner Dash 190 66%

Driver 171 90%

With the most cinematic car chases ever seen in a game, Driver made a huge impact in 1998. Despite rosey graphics, it's still a playable title.

Droplitz 184 91%

Droplitz is a superb puzzler that blends Rez-style layers of music, pipes and dials to create one of the most satisfying puzzlers in years.

Earthworm Jim HD 196 89%

echochrome 169 85%

Elefunk 170 45%

Everybody's Golf 2 62 83%

Fade To Black 09 44%

Fat Princess 183 65%

Fatal Inertia EX 168 65%

FIFA 09 Ultimate Team 178 61%

Final Fight: Double Impact 193 90%

This scrolling-fighter classic from 1989 makes an almost faultless appearance on PSN. Stick it on your download list.

Final Fantasy VII 181 96%

Even after all these years it still holds up. In fact, our mark seems to have gone up 3% since 1997.

Final Fantasy VIII 190 90%

A truly engaging RPG - if you've never experienced the game before then make sure this is the next thing you download.

Final Fantasy IX 195 90%

Never gets the love it deserves, but this PSN release gives you the chance to experience Square Enix's refreshing RPG all over again.

Flock! 179 70%

fIOW 151 90%

Another 90% game for the PS3, another lesson in simple, addictive gameplay. fIOW is an innovative title available on the Network.

Flower 176 85%

Frogger Returns 190 35%

G-Police 27 84%

Geon 175 71%

game	issue	score
Go! Puzzle	152	58%
Gran Turismo HD	150	75%
Gravity Crash	187	85%
Greed Corp	191	75%
GTI Club+	174	72%
Gundemonium Collection	197	80%
Gunstar Heroes	181	85%
Hamsterball	194	72%
Hardcore 4x4	15	81%
Hasbro Family Game Night	187	60%
Heavy Weapon	187	75%
High Velocity Bowling	163	50%
Hi-Octane	178	64%
Hustle Kings	190	87%
Hyperballoid HD	188	70%
Inferno Pool	181	81%
International Track & Field	171	80%
Interpol: The Trail Of Doctor Chaos	185	48%
Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao	185	70%
Jet Rider 2	176	71%

Joe Danger 194 96%

Simply put, Joe Danger is one of the best games you'll currently find on the PSN. Buy it. Buy it now.

Judge Dredd 18 19%

Jumping Flash 172 55%

Kick-Ass The Game 194 60%

Kula World 172 71%

Landit Bandit 195 66%

Lead & Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West 193 65%

Lemmings 151 79%

Linger In Shadows 173 69%

LocoRoco Cocoreccho! 159 80%

Lumines Supernova 178 90%

Probably the best puzzle game on the PSN, which is saying something because there's loads of competition.

Madden NFL Arcade 188 58%

Magic Carpet 179 65%

Marvel Vs Capcom 2 182 90%

This game has an astonishing amount to offer if you're prepared to plunge into its murky depths.

Matt Hazard: Blood Bath And Beyond 189 69%

MediEvil 173 45%

Mega Man 9 172 75%

Mega Man 10 192 82%

Metal Gear Solid 187 93%

While it looks rather rough now, the game itself remains a real high point in the franchise. Simply essential.

Metal Gear Solid Online 175 45%

Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition 195 94%

The HD remake of arguably the best game in the Monkey Island series is a more than welcome addition to the PSN.

Motorhead 173 60%

Namco Museum Essentials 193 60%

Noby Noby Boy 177 85%

Nucleus 155 82%

Numblast 183 60%

N2O 37 70%

OutRun Online Arcade 180 80%

Pain 183 69%

Peggle 189 94%

So addictive it should come with some sort of government warning. Terrific value for money and a superb little puzzle game.

PixelJunk Eden 169 67%

PixelJunk Monsters 163 94%

The second game in the PixelJunk series is great fun and brilliantly addictive. Buy it and play it constantly for hours on end!

PixelJunk Shooter 187 93%

Q-Games delivers excellence on the PSN once again with its PixelJunk series, this time in the form of a classic shoot-'em-up.

Piyotama 162 62%

Planet Minigolf 196 58%

game	issue	score
Polar Panic	190	65%
Populous: The Beginning	46	70%
Prince Of Persia Classic	173	67%
Puzzle Chronicles	194	70%
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	68%
Q*bert	58	53%
Rag Doll Kung Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%
Rampage: World Tour	29	77%
Ratchet & Clank: Quest For Booty	170	69%
Rayman	01	76%
Revenge Of The Wounded Dragons	191	60%
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Rocket Knight	194	74%
Rocketmen: Axis Of Evil	165	63%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 1	194	90%
Clever, funny and taxing in all the right ways, we're very happy that the Freelance Police are on PlayStation 3.		
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 2	194	92%
This is even better than the first episode due to the fact it has better puzzles and even funnier dialogue.		
Savage Moon	175	87%
Scott Pilgrim Vs The World	197	77%
Section 8	193	78%
Shank	197	86%
Shatter	183	91%
Sheep	171	78%
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%
Smash Cars	184	50%
SOCOM Confrontation	178	55%
Soldner-X 2: Final Prototype	195	70%
Spin Jam	174	32%
Syphon Filter	48	93%
Gabe Logan's gritty PSone adventure has shadowed all that came after. As always, the original really is best.		
Snakeball	176	92%
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Street Fighter Alpha: Warrior's Dream	159	57%
Street Skater 2	178	40%
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	151	83%
Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars	177	65%
Super Stardust HD	155	74%
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	72%
Switchball	191	75%
Syphon Filter 3	170	80%
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	91%
Telltale Games' excellent modern addition to the Monkey Island franchise finally sees the light of day on PSN. Go pick it up.		
Tank Battles	186	68%
Tekken HD	150	80%
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	87%
The Last Guy	171	91%
Snake meets Pac-Man meets GoogleMaps. The Last Guy is yet another innovative and compelling addition to the PSN's line-up.		
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%

game	issue	score
The Secret Of Monkey Island Special Edition	195	92%
LucasArts' classic point-and-click adventure gets an HD makeover and will hopefully be the first of many classics heading to PSN.		
Theme Hospital	32	80%
Theme Park	174	80%
TMNT: Turtles In Time Re-shelled	186	57%
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six	54	34%
Topolai: Spinning Through The Worlds	183	61%
ToyHome	162	31%
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trials Of Topaq	159	50%
Trine	184	85%
Uno	189	85%
Vagrant Story	189	82%
Vandal Hearts: Flames Of Judgment	192	87%
Wakeboarding HD	192	65%
Warhawk: Operation Fallen Star	171	80%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
WipeOut	01	89%
WipeOut HD	172	84%
Wolfenstein	181	70%
Worms	179	91%
There's a reason Worms is still going strong, and that's because people never get tired of its fun personality and addictive gameplay.		
Zuma	182	78%

PSP mini LISTING

Alien Havoc	186	68%
Bloons	186	65%
Brainpipe	186	70%
BreakQuest	186	45%
Field Runners	186	85%
Fortix	186	57%
Funky Punch	186	49%
Hero of Sparta	186	57%
Kahoots	186	88%
Pinball Fantasies	186	90%
Pinball Fantasies was originally released on the Amiga and features four tables and some excellent pinball gaming.		
Puzzle Scape	186	75%
Tetris	186	93%
How it is possible to make Tetris feel so fresh and so much fun again we don't know, but it's managed here.		
Vempire	186	67%

PSP LISTING

game	issue	score
300: March To Glory	152	59%
Ace Combat X	147	72%
Ace Combat: Joint Assault	194	79%
After Burner: Black Falcon	152	82%
Ape Academy	134	44%
Ape Academy 2	145	52%
Ape Escape P	140	37%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	190	45%
Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines	187	77%
Astonishia Story	142	68%
Beaterator	186	72%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger Portable	194	84%
Blood Bowl	184	53%
Bombberman	150	83%
Boulder Dash: Rocks!	165	69%
Breath Of Fire III	138	82%
Brothers In Arms: D-Day	149	69%
Burnout Dominator	153	65%
Burnout Legends	134	94%
Despite being more of a 'best of' than a completely new game, Legends is the best racing game on the PSP.		
Buzz! Brain Bender	175	68%
Capcom Classics Collection Reloaded	147	80%
Capcom Classics Collection Remixed	141	72%
Cars	143	60%
Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles	163	78%
Championship Manager	137	65%
Championship Manager 2006	140	32%
Cid The Dummy	180	32%
Coded Arms	134	53%
Call Of Duty: Roads To Victory	153	69%
Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus	134	84%
Crisis Core - Final Fantasy VII	167	87%
Crush	154	80%
Dante's Inferno	191	76%
Dead Or Alive: Paradise	192	56%
Disgaea: Afternoon Of Darkness	161	92%
An absolute must-have for RPG fans, and one of the best titles available on the PSP. A simply brilliant game.		
Dissidia: Final Fantasy	184	60%
Disgaea 2: Dark Hero Days	190	87%
Dragon Ball Z: Shin Budokai 2	154	50%
Driver 76	154	68%
Dungeons & Dragons: Tactics	159	55%
Dungeon Siege: Throne Of Agony	148	85%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	179	69%
EA Replay	147	74%
echochrome	169	85%
echoshift	191	73%
Everybody's Golf 2	167	86%
Everybody's Tennis	195	88%
Every Extend Extra	145	84%
Exit	138	65%

HISTORY OF A SERIES

Call Of Duty

2003-present • PS2
PS3 • PSP



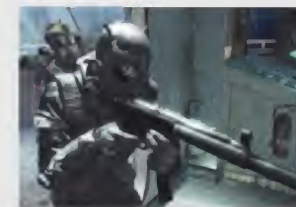
THE BEGINNINGS OF the biggest series in the world were rather unassuming, with the first two games only reaching PS2 in stripped-down form: *Finest Hour* (83%, **Play** 125) and *Big Red One* (82%, **Play** 137). Then it changed.



COD 3 (77%, **Play** 151) made its way to the newly released PS3 and, while it wasn't the world-changing instalment later editions turned out to be, it did mark the first time a 'proper' *COD* had come to a PlayStation console.



We still hadn't hit the high notes of the series by the time *Call Of Duty: Roads To Victory* (69%, **Play** 153) was released on PSP, but by the end of the same year it all went a bit loopy. And modern.



COD 4: Modern Warfare (88%, **Play** 160) was released and suddenly everything changed – suddenly everybody cared. Treyarch's follow-up, *World At War* (68%, **Play** 173) did well, too, but *MW2* (94%, **Play** 186) blew everything out of the water.



New games from Treyarch, Infinity Ward and Sledgehammer on the horizon should ensure *Call Of Duty's* history will become even richer as the future rolls around.

Play Book Club

Add these books to your wish list now

The Art Of God Of War III

After the success of the *Art Of Uncharted 2* compendium, Ballistic Publishing has teamed up with SCEA and its Santa Monica studios to bring you a new 272-page book dedicated to *God Of War III*. The book contains never-before-seen concept art, character modelling and production art. It is available as both a paperback and fancy leather-bound edition.

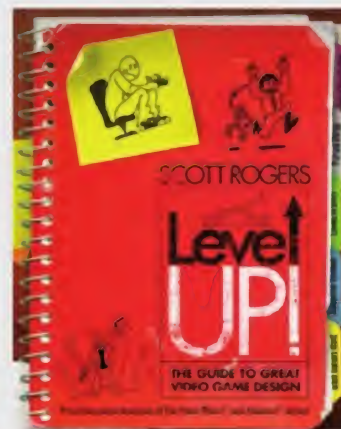
More information can be found at www.ballisticpublishing.com



Level Up: The Guide To Great Video Game Design

Scott Rogers, a videogame designer behind hits such as *God Of War* and the *Maximo* series, shares his knowledge and experience on how to make videogames great. Written with all levels of game designers in mind, there are plenty of illustrations and design concepts to help ensure you don't fall down hidden traps.

More information can be found at www.wiley.com



*denotes import review

PSONE TO PSN

Dino Crisis 2

70% • Play 80



THE FIRST *Dino Crisis* game, released in 1999, was very much of the *Resident Evil* mould. It was a great game, but it was derived very much from the survival-horror template. The sequel needed to be something different to keep us interested. Luckily, it was.

Dino Crisis 2 took the slow-paced jumps and scares



of the first game and 'did an *Aliens*'. More dinosaurs, more weapons, more speed, more action – more everything. Sure, the story tried to continue, but who actually remembers that part? No, all we can remember was destroying wave after wave of Velociraptors and Allosaurus's and trying to best our previous Extinction Points scores.

The second game was far simpler than the original, which



was something we criticised it for, but of the games released on PlayStation Network these days it's a perfect fit. It's easy to get into, addictive and still a lot of fun to blast through.

The original *Dino Crisis* is available on PSN, though only in America. It confuses and annoys us to think that the far more exciting, still fun-to-play sequel doesn't look to be



making its way any time soon. We might be wrong – we hope we are – but we do genuinely hope Capcom sees sense and brings *Dino Crisis 2* to PSN.

game	issue	score
F1 2009	187	66%
F1 Grand Prix	134	81%
Field Commander	145	83%
FIFA 06	136	43%
FIFA 07	147	81%
FIFA World Cup 2010	193	65%
Fired Up	134	60%
Final Fantasy	164	63%
Final Fantasy Tactics	159	86%
FlatOut: Head On	164	79%
Football Manager 2007	147	62%
Football Manager Handheld	139	82%
Football Manager Handheld 2008	161	49%
Football Manager Handheld 2010	187	60%
Formula One 06	143	78%
Frantix	136	36%
Gangs Of London	144	65%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	42%
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	188	55%
Gitaroo Man Lives!	144	79%
Go! Sudoku	137	45%
God Of War: Chains Of Olympus	165	84%
Gradius Collection	144	80%
Gran Turismo	184	85%
Gripshift	136	81%
Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars	185	95%
Bar some combat control issues, <i>GTA: Chinatown Wars</i> has perfectly translated to the PSP. It's a must-have game.		
GTA: Liberty City Stories	135	95%
Successfully taking the <i>GTA</i> formula and putting it on one UMD of pure goodness, this is one of the PSP's best games.		
GTA: Vice City Stories	147	96%
Improving on its predecessor, the only way <i>Vice City Stories</i> could be topped is if <i>San Andreas</i> comes to the PSP.		
Half-Minute Hero	191	87%
Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire	136	69%
Hellboy: Science Of Evil	170	60%
Holy Invasion Of Privacy. Badman! What Did I Do To Deserve This?	186	73%
Hot Pixel	155	73%
Indiana Jones And The Staff Of Kings	181	60%
Infected	141	68%
Innocent Life: A Futuristic Harvest Moon	154	70%
International Athletics	170	40%
Invizimals	187	71%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
Juiced: Eliminator	141	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	160	80%
Kao Challengers	137	60%
Killzone: Liberation	146	83%
Kingdom Hearts: Birth By Sleep	196	88%
Lemmings	138	63%
LittleBigPlanet	186	90%
Refined in certain areas and slightly worse in Create mode but still a fantastic addition to PSP's lineup.		
LocoRoco	143	94%
We called this the definitive PSP title in our review, and it is a game that no PSP owner should be without.		
LocoRoco 2	173	82%
LocoRoco Midnight Carnival	186	81%
Lumines II	137	74%
Madden NFL 06	137	74%
Marvel Trading Cards	155	38%
Me And My Katamari	138	86%
Medal Of Honor Heroes	147	72%
Medieval Resurrection	134	53%
Mercury Meltdown	145	66%
Metal Slug Anthology	150	91%
We're not too clued up on retro games, but we do know our <i>Metal Slug</i> and the <i>Anthology</i> is a great compilation.		

game	issue	score
Metal Gear Acid 2	138	92%
More card-based espionage starring everyone's favourite mullet-head, with funky new cel-shaded graphics.		
Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker	193	92%
A fantastic entry in the <i>Metal Gear Solid</i> series and one of the best games on PSP. Wonderful.		
Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops	150	91%
A proper <i>Metal Gear Solid</i> game on a portable machine. It was never likely to disappoint, and it didn't. A great title.		
Miami Vice	144	82%
Micro Machines V4	142	71%
Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition	134	57%
ModNation Racers	193	70%
Monster Hunter Freedom	140	81%
Monster Hunter Freedom 2	157	59%
Monster Hunter Freedom Unite	181	77%
MotoGP	146	75%
Motorstorm: Arctic Edge	184	72%
Mytran Wars	179	85%
Namco Museum Battle Collection	136	68%
Naruto Shippuden Legends: Akatsuki Rising	185	46%
Naruto Ultimate Ninja Heroes 2	169	46%
NBA Ballers: Rebound	139	61%
Need For Speed Undercover	175	57%
Need For Speed Most Wanted	136	73%
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	139	93%
The arcade classic comes to PSP and is just as good as it's ever been. The perfect game to play on a rainy Sunday afternoon.		
PaRappa The Rapper	155	88%
Patapon	163	86%
Patapon 2	177	87%
Patchwork Heroes	192	85%
Pirates Of The Caribbean	143	52%
PixelJunk Monster Deluxe	185	86%
Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	163	77%
Pocket Racers	144	49%
PoPoLoCroIS	142	71%
Power Stone Collection	145	88%
PQ – Practical Intelligence Quotient	141	52%
Prince Of Persia Revelations	138	69%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	194	52%
Prinny: Can I Really Be The Hero?	181	80%
PSN Collection: Power Pack	173	70%
PSN Collection: Puzzle Pack	173	54%
Pursuit Force	134	83%
Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice	159	76%
Puzzle Chronicles	190	61%
Puzzle Quest	153	66%
R-Type Tactics	170	74%
Rainbow Six Vegas	156	78%
Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters	154	78%
Rengoku 2	144	72%
Resistance: Retribution	177	76%
Ridge Racer 2	145	78%
Ridge Racer	132	91%
Arguably the best launch game on the PSP, <i>Ridge Racer</i> still stands up as one of the finest racing games for the system.		
Rock Band Unplugged	181	92%
<i>Unplugged</i> comes highly recommended. It's superb – there are few better rhythm-action games on the handheld.		
Rocky Balboa	150	68%
Secret Agent Clank	169	79%
Sega Mega Drive Collection	177	79%
Sega Rally	158	90%
Very nearly as good as its PlayStation 3 counterpart. Which is a good thing because that's the best rally game money can buy.		
Shinobido: Tales Of The Ninja	150	60%
Silent Hill Origins	160	87%
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories	190	52%
Smash Court Tennis	154	58%

game	issue	score
SOCOM Fire Team 2	154	70%
SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo 3	190	71%
SOCOM: Tactical Strike	160	85%
SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo	140	69%
Sonic Rivals	147	70%
Sonic Rivals 2	162	35%
Soul Calibur: Broken Destiny	183	92%
New modes and characters keep things interesting, while fights are as hectic and solid as ever.		
Spider-Man 3	162	32%
Spinout	149	81%
Splinter Cell: Essentials	139	71%
SSX On Tour	138	76%
Star Ocean: Second Evolution	178	78%
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	148	59%
Star Wars Battlefront II	137	74%
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	187	65%
Star Wars: Lethal Alliance	148	69%
Star Wars: Renegade Squadron	160	78%
Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max	138	70%
Street Riders	140	29%
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	142	54%
Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	140	90%
In the absence of a 'real' MGS game, it's left to Gabe Logan to carry the stealthy torch, and he does a fine job.		
Tekken 6	187	90%
Fantastic to look at and fast and fluid to play, <i>Tekken 6</i> is the best game of the series on PSP.		
Tekken: Dark Resurrection	143	92%
<i>Tekken: Dark Resurrection</i> is instantly playable and provides the PSP's first great brawler.		
Tenchu: Shadow Assassins	179	71%
Tenchu: Time Of The Assassins	146	51%
The Con	153	59%
The Cube	153	64%
The Eye Of Judgment: Legends	191	57%
The Godfather Mob Wars	136	66%
The Lord Of The Rings: Tactics	136	66%
The Sims 2	137	71%
TNA Impact! Cross The Line	189	58%
TOCA 3	152	70%
Tokobot	140	79%
Tomb Raider: Anniversary	156	81%
Tomb Raider: Legend	140	72%
Twisted Metal Head-On	134	54%
UFC Undisputed 2010	197	80%
Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins	145	88%
Undead Knights	189	46%
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code	140	59%
Valhalla Knights	158	49%
Valkyria Chronicles 2	196	87%
Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth	153	78%
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	140	82%
Virtua Tennis 3	152	88%
Warhammer 40,000: Squad Command	161	70%
What Did I Do To Deserve This My Lord!? 2	192	78%
WipEout Pulse	159	86%
WipEout Pure	138	91%
Exceeding all of our expectations as to what a handheld <i>WipEout</i> game could be, <i>Pure</i> is an essential PSP purchase.		
World Of Pool	156	43%
World Tour Poker	141	67%
World Tour Soccer 2	142	40%
Worms: Open Warfare 2	157	80%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2006	137	84%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2007	147	80%
World Rally Championship	134	67%

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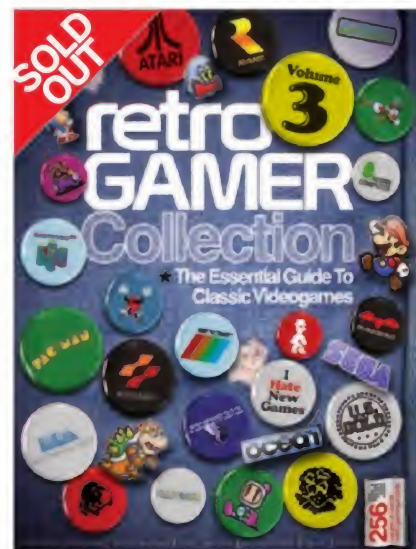
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Free game demo!



HEROES

PLAY IT AGAIN, SAMURAI

Sengoku Basara demo – Heroes vs Warriors!

IF YOU'VE READ our review of *Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes* on page 95 of this very issue, then you might still be undecided on whether or not to go out and buy it. What you really need to know is – exactly how similar to *Samurai Warriors* is it? This **EXCLUSIVE** free demo is designed to help answer that question.

These two games *do not* come from the same publisher, developer or franchise, yet – because they are both loosely based on the feudal period of Japanese history, and because one is an imitation (or piss-take) of the other – it really can be frightfully hard to tell them apart.

You can learn to identify the historical figures that appear in both *Samurai Warriors* and *Samurai Heroes*, and practise telling the two games apart right here on this page. Each of the historical figures named and described on the right is pictured as both a Warrior (below) and Hero (above). Simply match a character from each group with each name then check the upside-down answers at the foot of the page to see how many you got right.

NOBUNAGA ODA

Throughout his childhood and teenage years Nobunaga was a bit of a loon and earned the nickname 'The Fool Of Owari'. However, he would become one of Japanese history's most brilliant leaders.

YOSHIHIRO SHIMAZU

A powerful general whose famous victories included defeating 37,000 Ming troops with just 7,000 of his own, earning his formidable soldiers the nickname 'Shimazu Demons'.

MOTOCHIKA CHOSOKABE

Ruler of Shikoku, one of Japan's four main islands, for nearly a decade, Motochika surrendered power when 100,000 of Hideyoshi Hashiba's men showed up and told him to.

MASAMUNE DATE

This iconic samurai warlord was known as the 'one-eyed dragon' and was famous for the striking crescent moon design of his helmet. He also founded the city of Sendai, now home to over a million people.

YUKIMURA SANADA

Accolades granted to Yukimura include 'a hero who may appear once in a hundred years,' 'crimson demon of war' and 'number one warrior in Japan'. He was well 'ard.

OICHI

Nobunaga's younger sister was known to be a bit of a hottie in her day. She's the only female in this demo, but don't be hasty with your answers – it could be a trick. You've been warned.

KEIJI MAEDA

A samurai famed for his reckless but effective cavalry charges. His horse, Matsukaze is perhaps even more legendary than he is. Legend has it, he was the only man wild enough to tame it.

MOTONARI MORI

A great believer in working together, Motonari expanded his power and influence largely through careful negotiation and diplomacy, and by ensuring there was no in-fighting within his own clan.

MITSUNARI ISHIDA

A samurai in his youth, Mitsunari later specialised in administration and finances. Political unrest saw him choose his loyalties unwisely and he was captured and beheaded by a mob in 1600.

TEYASU TOKUGAWA

Founder of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1600, which would remain the ruling power in Japan for an impressive 268 years. His hobbies included falconry and executing people he didn't like.



WARRIORS

E2 Nobunaga Oda, F1 Yoshihiro Shimazu, I4 Motochika Chosokabe, A10 Masamune Date, H9 Yukimura Sanada, B3 Oichi, D8 Keiji Maeda, G5 Motonari Mori, J6 Mitsunari Ishida, C7 Ieyasu Tokugawa



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